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AS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?

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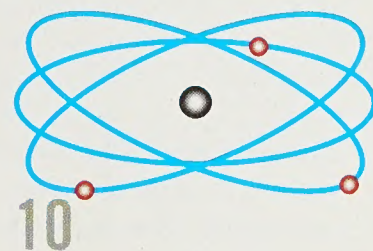


Two Wheels & Thousands of Miles

At age 70, Frances Miller is closing in on logging half a million miles by motorcycle.

10 Nuclear Energy Today

Nuclear energy today is considered a safe, reliable and environmentally acceptable way to generate electricity. Learn how it works and why your cooperative has invested in it.



18 Oh, What a Nice Surprise!

Fresh fish, snake lights, underwear and other tacky regifting stories.

25 "We Care" Quilts

Eunice Haywood of Wake Forest is making quilts to help preserve black gospel music.



On the Cover

The Poplar Grove Baptist Church in Boone. Photography by Frederica Georgia (www.freddiephotography.com)



departments

First Person	4	Joyner's Corner	33
The cost of your electricity. Plus: letters and photos.		Carolina Compass	35
More Power to You	8	Adventures in Union County.	
Cooperatives face challenges in growing communities...Tideland EMC supports sustainable tourism in eastern North Carolina.		Carolina Gardens	38
Carolina Country Store	26	Tools that make gardening easier.	
You're In Carolina Country If	27	Energy Cents	40
Marketplace	32, 34	How to stay warm and save energy overnight.	
Tar Heel Lessons	31	Classified Ads	41
North Carolina Indians.		Carolina Kitchen	42
		Oreo Cookie Balls, Praline Grahams, Chocolate Peppermint Bark, Peanut Butter Snowballs.	

The cost of your electricity

By Buddy G. Creed



What did we pay for gasoline 10 years ago? We paid about \$1.21 per gallon. Since then, on average, the price has risen about 7 percent per year.

What did we pay for cable or satellite TV in 1996? We paid about \$37 per month. The price since has risen about 4.5 percent per year.

During the same period, the price of electricity has risen by less than 1.5 percent per year.

Believe it or not, the national cost of electricity today, when adjusted for inflation, is less than what it was in 1980. Very few commodities have remained such a good value. Compared to other consumer products and services, electricity is a bargain.

Electricity prices also have been relatively consistent over the years. Throughout the last decade, the price of electricity for residential use has been the most stable when compared to the swings of heating oil, propane and natural gas (see the chart below). Those fuels are vulnerable to shifts in the market, especially the rise in global demand. Prices for those fuels surged in 2000–2001, followed by steep declines in 2002. For example, the average price of heating oil in 1999 was 87 cents and in a single year soared to \$1.31. The story was similar for propane, which climbed nearly 33 percent between 1999 and 2000. It then fell dramatically until 2002 and has been steadily increasing by about 13 percent since then. Meanwhile, electricity prices have remained stable, increasing on average just over 1 percent per year.

But the changes in the cost of fuels we use to generate electricity will affect the price you pay for power. For example, coal and natural gas, which account for about 68

percent of the electricity generated nationally, increased in price by 11 percent and 12 percent on average, respectively, during the first half of 2006. As a result, during the first six months of this year, average U.S. residential electricity prices rose by about 11 percent compared with the same period last year. In 2007 prices are expected to increase nationally by another 3.6 percent, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Add to this the likelihood that most people simply will use more electricity. Electricity consumption is expected to increase by 1.1 percent in 2007. So, you probably are looking at higher electric bills in 2007.

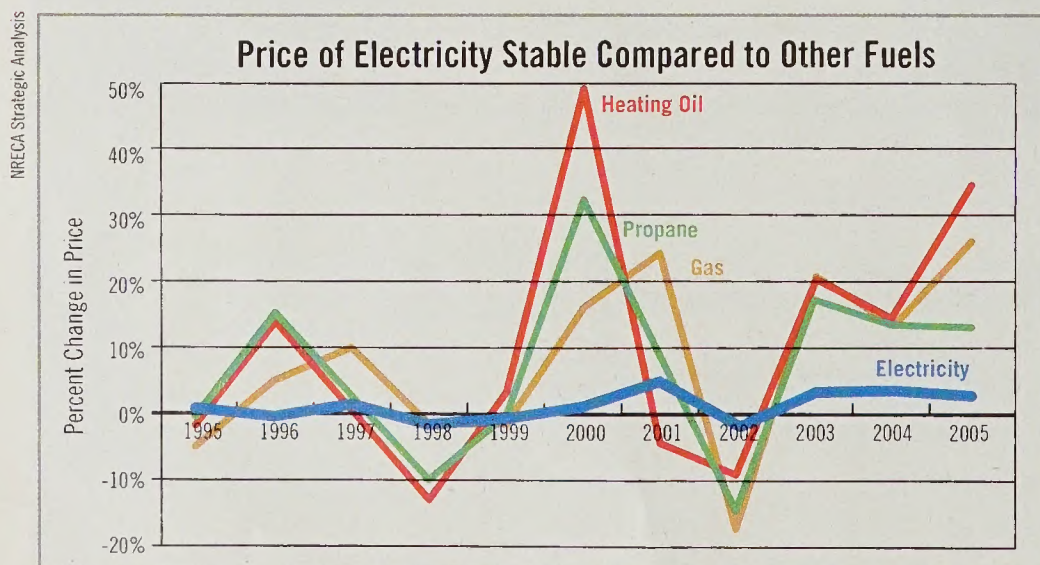
Because of all these factors, some cooperatives in North Carolina and nationwide have had to adjust their rates upward.

However, there is one thing you can count on: Your Touchstone Energy cooperative will do all it can to stabilize prices. For many years we have acquired our wholesale power from a variety of generation sources, including nuclear energy. The mix in our power supply makes us less vulnerable to the volatility of the market. We also make it a business priority to operate efficiently, to plan carefully the maintenance and improvement of our physical distribution system. In addition, we help you conserve energy at your homes and places of business. And we are involved with developing new technologies—including renewable energy sources and fuel cells—that can expand our options and protect our environment.

Cooperatives are utilities that are owned by their members. We are not in the business to make a profit. Any profits we make are used to maintain and improve our service, or they are returned to the membership as credits. Our reason for being in business is to provide you with reliable and safe electric power at the most reasonable cost possible. Looking at the record, cooperatives have scored pretty well for many years.

We wish you all a happy holiday season and a prosperous new year. ❶

Buddy G. Creed is CEO and executive vice president of South River Electric Membership Corporation, the Touchstone Energy cooperative that serves 39,200 members in Harnett, Cumberland, Sampson and parts of Bladen and Johnston counties. He also is vice president of the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, the cooperatives' power supply organization.



The price of electricity has remained stable while the price of other heating fuels has been volatile.

Source: Energy Information Administration, 2005 preliminary data

Stealing collards in December

One of our readers wrote to us that "you know you're from Carolina country if you know what collard stealing is." No one we asked knew what collard stealing is, so we did some research.

The following passage is from "Collards in North Carolina," by Edward H. Davis and John T. Morgan, published in the May 2005 issue of *Southeastern Geographer*. The journal is the biannual publication of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers and is published by the University of North Carolina Press.

The numerous references by elderly informants to the widespread practice of "collard stealing" as a Christmas season recreational activity during the 1920s and 1930s confirms the ubiquitous presence of collard patches during that period in eastern North Carolina. Collard stealing was engaged in by groups of teenagers who would spend hours on a cold December night walking the dirt roads and trails of their rural communities to play tricks on people thought to be wealthy or eccentric. Participants in a few areas participated in collard stealing in early January as a part of the celebration of Old Christmas. In this folk activity, a few mature collard plants would be pulled from a roadside garden, then taken to a nearby residence and dropped on the front steps. The celebrating youths would then knock on the door of the unsuspecting recipients of the collards, yell loudly and run away. The offended residents would answer the door to discover their gift of collards. During the hard times of the Great Depression, the practice of collard stealing was sometimes feigned by teens who would bring stolen collards to their own homes and leave them on their steps or porches. Their unsuspecting parents would discover the collards the next morning, and think they were left by mischievous neighbor kids. Then, of course, they would cook and eat the needed food.



Santa casting

Santa Claus knows that surf fishing can be pretty good on the Outer Banks in winter. This proves he was there. It was last year just before Christmas when he visited the kids at Ocracoke School.

Why we whup okra

This is for Meredith Hart who asked what good it does to "whup" okra to get more pods ["First Person," September 2006].

The old folks whupped okra with their walking stick, which was usually a stick about 5 ½ feet long from small dogwood trees.

The whole idea started in a garden after a farmer's horse was stung by a bee, causing the horse to break the clevis that held the plow to the single tree. That horse dragged the single tree down the okra row. On the next lap around the garden, the horse managed to hit the second row of okra before the farmer got the horse caught. By luck, the garden was fenced in, making it easier to stop the horse.

The farmer had planted three rows of okra, so with two rows torn up by the horse the farmer said he reckoned the good Lord decided he didn't need but one row of okra. The farmer got the horse back to the barn to settle down, then got busy making hay and forgot about the okra until the second week of July.

On a Sunday evening he was checking to see if anything in the garden was ready to be picked and found the two rows of okra that the horse whupped were full of okra and the third row didn't have a single pod of okra ready for picking. Thus came the idea behind whupping okra.

So if you will take a stick and beat the leaves off of the okra plant, it will bear sooner. Instead of wearing myself out whupping the okra, I look at the base of a limb and if it is putting out another leaf, I will cut the first leaf off and leave the second leaf to produce the limb for an okra pod.

James K. Gray Jr. / Woodleaf / EnergyUnited

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Ready to play

This was Christmas 1952 and my children, Judy was 5, Robert was 3 (standing next to the bicycle) and Frank a little over 1. They would get up at 3 or 4 a.m. and sneak down the stairs to see what Santa had brought. This Christmas morning they had been up early, but we didn't take their pictures until after breakfast and they were dressed. I remember they didn't want to have their picture taken because they just wanted to play and eat candy. We couldn't find Santa to get him into the picture.

Edna C. Miller / Candler / Haywood EMC

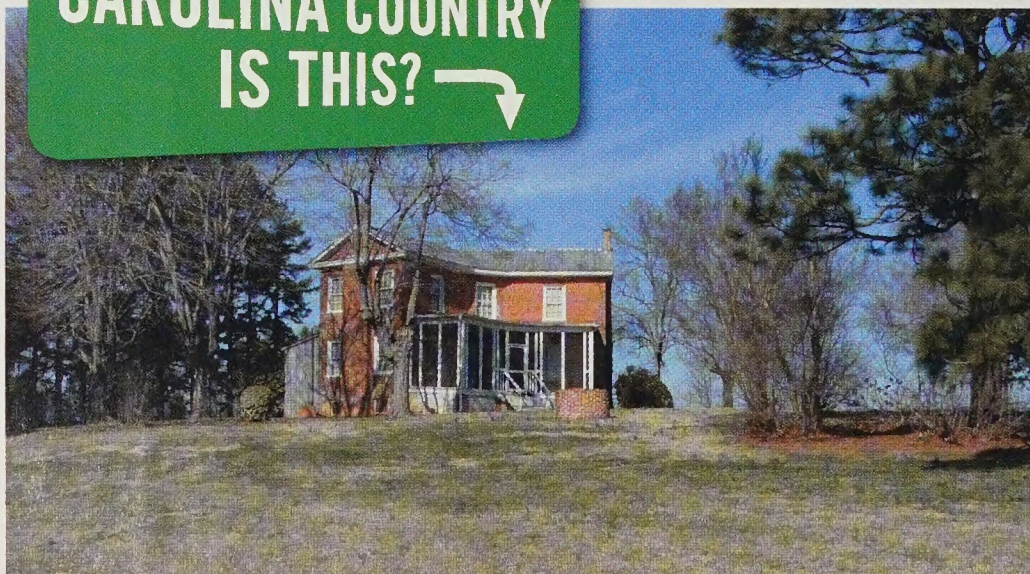


Inland Tractall, now retired

This is my son on Christmas Day 1951. He was so happy that Santa had brought him a tractor. He spent countless hours and years "plowing." After almost 55 years, the tractor is now retired upstairs with slick—very slick—tires and faded paint, but still very much loved.

Martha Hodnett / Richlands / Jones-Onslow EMC

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS? →



November winner:

The November photo showed the Grimes Beverly house off Hwy. 11 about a mile north of Bethel at the Edgecombe and Pitt county lines. It's on Roberson School Rd., once called Beverly Lane. You can see the old Hwy. 11 roadbed in the foreground. Correct answers were numbered and the \$25 winner chosen at random was Josh Roberson of Martin County, a member of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC.

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by Dec. 8 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
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The winner, chosen at random and announced in our January issue, will receive \$25.

November



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EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY

Co-ops face the challenges of doing business in growing communities

As North Carolina becomes an increasingly popular place to live and do business, utility services of all kinds grow accordingly, to serve more families, buildings and facilities. The state's electric cooperatives that have served primarily rural areas in the past have adapted to meet new requirements of housing subdivisions and commercial services cropping up in places that not long ago were farmland and woodlands.

The top executives of three of North Carolina's fastest-growing Touchstone Energy cooperatives recently discussed examples occurring in their service areas. One is around suburban Charlotte, another in the northeastern coastal plain, and a third in the Blue Ridge Mountains. In all three cases, cooperatives working to meet higher demand have focused on member and public communications, government permitting and politics, detailed engineering and construction plans, and legal challenges in order to upgrade their distribution systems.

Union County

In western Union County near Charlotte—the 16th-fastest growing county in the U.S.—the cooperative that has served the area for more than 60 years, Union Power, began working in July 2005 to site a substation needed to serve the expanding residential population. Union Power's CEO Tony Herrin said his co-op saw demand for electric service in pockets of this region rise 40 percent between 2005 and 2006. A substation—which draws in high-voltage power from transmission cables and “steps” it down to a safe level for local distribution—would give the communities reliable electric service on demand instead of depending on a substation located a long distance away. After selecting and buying a site and acquiring permits to build the substation economically, Union Power faced opposition in the community of Wesley Chapel. Opposition arose, Herrin said, as an all-new set of municipal officials were elected to replace incumbents. The new officials—elected by voters mainly to



As communities grow so must the distribution systems needed to deliver electricity to them.

keep Wesley Chapel a small, rural community—acknowledged that Union Power met 13 of 14 criteria the town had set for granting a permit. The one standard the substation did not meet, the officials said, was that it was not “in harmony with the surrounding area.” Herrin said the co-op went back to the drawing board, found a site elsewhere, acquired the permits (not without a challenge from a different corner), and began building. Herrin's observation is that “subjective standards” within ordinances or covenants—where an opinion determines the rules—make it challenging for utilities to meet the requirements of those they serve.

The Albemarle Sound area

Population in the northeastern farmland and swamps between the Albemarle Sound and the Virginia border for generations grew at a

snail's pace, but no longer. In the past eight years, demand for electric service there has doubled, said CEO Jeff Edwards of Albemarle EMC. The co-op anticipated it and four years ago began planning a new transmission line in its territory. Maintaining its own transmission line, instead of tapping off lines owned and maintained by Virginia-based Dominion Power, would help the cooperative deliver much more reliable electric service to its members. Albemarle EMC worked to attain rights to site the line on farm roads and remote tracts—searching titles, surveying, appraising values, personally discussing the proposals—and the vast majority of landowners agreed with the need and granted permission. But not all agreed. “Most property owners we contacted understand what we need and are very community-

mind,” Edwards said. “But there always will be some who will go to great lengths to elevate their property values.” The co-op is still facing a court challenge before it can begin work on its new line.

Ashe & Watauga counties

Ashe and Watauga counties in the Blue Ridge Mountains have seen a rising population tide for years. Easements have allowed Blue Ridge Electric to maintain transmission lines to serve the area, and increasing demand has required continual upgrading of these

lines. Blue Ridge Electric recently has faced legal challenges to upgrading the system even among longtime Blue Ridge Electric families and on property where the co-op had previously secured easements. CEO Doug Johnson said the main issue is the higher value of property in the region. “Land where we had easements had once been valued at \$5,000 to \$10,000 an acre,” Johnson said. “Now the property owners consider it’s worth much more.” Some landowners, even when their property has been subject to an easement for decades, neverthe-

less raise objections. When additional land is required for an upgrade, negotiating with landowners for new easements requires considerable staff time on legal and education issues. “Just because you see the demand coming,” Johnson said, “does not put these projects on a fast track anymore. We’re looking at 12 to 24 months of lead time just for the communication process.” He said Blue Ridge engaged in “one-on-one” communication with property owners involved and succeeded in clearing up issues.

—Michael E.C. Gery

Tideland Electric helps professionals acquire training in sustainable tourism

Tideland EMC this year funded scholarships to help eastern North Carolina communities learn more about sustainable development of the region’s tourism business. The cooperative considered the scholarships an economic development initiative that would help small business owners and community non-profit organizations afford professional training. Tideland requested the recipients to share with others in their organization or community details about the events they attended.

“Our rural economies have to diversify and tourism is an ideal fit,” said Tideland CEO Bill Stacy. “We have an abundance of natural, historical and cultural resources already in place. What we really lack are the human resources to pull it all together. The Tideland scholarship program addresses that need by funding tourism education and training.”

Attending a workshop in Plymouth this summer on the new N.C. Birding Trail—which is expected to draw bird and nature enthusiasts to the region—were Anita Fletcher of Sallie Dixon’s Bed and Breakfast in the Lake Landing community of Hyde County and Nancy Leech of Firefly Gift and Garden Shop on Ocracoke.

Nancy Leech said, “Often we fail to focus on our existing tourism assets because we live and work in the area everyday. The North Carolina Birding



Tundra swans at Lake Mattamuskeet in Hyde County.

Workshop helped me take a fresh look at our county’s natural resources from an outsider’s perspective. I more fully appreciate what we have and realize the marketing and revenue potential we’ve failed to capitalize on. But we can’t capitalize on what we fail to preserve. Having grown up in Beaufort County, I’ve seen these birds all my life and I think locals do take them for granted. For birders, seeing these native and migratory species is often the culmination of a lifelong dream.”

Scholarships also were issued to three people who planned to attend a major tourism conference in October

organized by East Carolina University’s Institute for Tourism. They went to Bill Ellers, Pamlico County Cooperative Extension Agent; Jerry Prescott, Pamlico County Small Business Center; and Alethia Williams-King, a board member with the Ware Creek Community Development Program, which is working on preserving a Rosenwald School.

Tideland EMC serves more than 22,000 member accounts in Beaufort, Craven, Dare, Hyde, Pamlico and Washington counties.

NC Tourism—Bill Russ

NUCLEAR POWER TODAY

By Anna Turnage

Global warming, dependence on unstable nations for our oil and some of our natural gas supply, and economics are the main reasons for the resurgence of interest in nuclear power.

—Paul J. Turinsky
N.C. State University

The life of nuclear power in the United States has come full circle over the past 30 years. In fact, today's "renaissance" of nuclear energy is strangely reminiscent of its rise to popularity in the early to mid-1970s as a cheaper, cleaner energy source. Despite lingering reservations among some groups, the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) could begin the licensing process for 20 new nuclear plants over the next five years.

According to experts, the bottom line value for this particular source of energy still rests on its cost-efficiency and environmental benefits.

"Global warming, dependence on unstable nations for our oil and some of our natural gas supply, and economics are the main reasons for the resurgence of interest in nuclear power," says Dr. Paul J. Turinsky, a professor of nuclear engineering at N.C. State University.

Nuclear power first became a popular alternative for the nation's energy demands as a result of the 1973 Arab Oil Embargo. Today, with continuing unrest in the Middle East and environmental concerns related to global warming, the United States again finds itself searching for ways to reduce its reliance on oil. Add that to the strong economic and safety performance of nuclear plants in the U.S. and an increasing demand for energy, and it adds up to a recipe for success that the industry has not seen since the 1980s.

But the road to this point has not been easy. As James A. Lake, associate director for the nuclear program at the Idaho National Laboratory, wrote in a State Department newsletter, "Nuclear power in the United States was born in the 1950s and 1960s to unreasonable and, as it turned out, unachievable expectations of being so inexpensive that it was 'too cheap to meter.'"

According to Lake, the first plants to come online experienced difficulties with rising construction costs and safety performance that eventually led to the accident at the Three Mile Island in 1979. The "fallout," so to speak, from this accident resulted in much tighter restrictions on construction from the NRC to increase plant safety. But the new regulations also led to delays and increased costs for the plants under construction. Progress Energy's Harris Nuclear Plant and Duke Energy's Catawba Nuclear Station were both caught in this wave of cost increases, and, as a result those plants cost much more than was originally anticipated.

"These higher fixed costs partially offset the lower energy cost of nuclear output," explains Joe Brannan, chief operating officer and senior vice president for power supply at North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), the power supply cooperative owned by North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives. "But, there are three primary advantages to nuclear generation when compared to many other available sources of energy: nuclear generation generally has highly dependable output (high capacity factor); the generation process releases none of the greenhouse gases associated with fossil fired generation; and the energy price is stable and among the lowest of all sources of generation."

The Three Mile Island incident has become better known over the years as a safety success story rather than a disaster since there was little or no radiation leakage and no threat to the people living near the plant. Particularly when compared to the 1986 accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine, it became abundantly clear that nuclear plants in the United States were some of the best constructed and safely run in the world.

“Needless to say, there will always be folks who find fault in regard to nuclear safety,” Turinsky says. “But I would say most folks are not greatly concerned about nuclear safety issues. Opinion polls and NRC design certification of nuclear plants indicate this.”

Turinsky says that one of the bigger issues still unresolved today is that of nuclear waste storage. The United States government still has not designated a place to store high-level waste. For more than 20 years, the utility industry and federal government have been paying to study, plan and build a repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. While it remains the main candidate, Yucca Mountain is not expected to be prepared to accept waste until 2017. Spent fuel is currently stored at the respective power plant sites.

Despite the concerns, the benefits of nuclear energy are clearly winning out, particularly since safety has not proven to be a problem. The increasing need for energy, particularly in fast growing states like North Carolina, are leading many companies to consider constructing new plants. Duke Energy and Progress Energy are among those companies. Duke has chosen a site in Cherokee County, S.C., for a new nuclear plant, and Progress Energy is proposing to add a reactor to its Harris site to meet increasing energy demands.

For North Carolina’s Touchstone Energy cooperatives, the potential for new nuclear plants in North Carolina all comes down to providing a reliable, low-cost and safe energy supply, Brannan says.

“We will evaluate the total cost and strategic fit of each generation type or supply for our customers,” he said. “Overall, however, the Carolina area will benefit from additional capacity to meet the area’s growing demand. Clearly, having adequate supply is a key component to ensuring reliable delivery into the future. Additionally, increasing the capacity in the geographic area would lead to additional potential supply opportunities.”

Anna Turnage is a writer and doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

North Carolina’s electric cooperatives’ interest in nuclear energy

Nuclear energy is a key component of North Carolina’s Touchstone Energy cooperatives’ power supply portfolio. As part owner of the Catawba Nuclear Station in York County, S.C., about half of the co-ops’ annual energy needs are met through nuclear energy.

Catawba’s Unit 1 and Unit 2 began commercial operation in 1985 and 1986, respectively. The 2,258-megawatt Catawba plant includes twin pressurized-water reactors (see diagram next page). Operated and co-owned by Duke Energy, the Catawba plant ran at an overall capacity factor of 97.5 percent in 2005. Capacity factor is the ratio of actual net electrical energy generation to the maximum possible energy that could have been generated if a plant operated at the maximum capacity rating for the same time period.

Through their power supply cooperative NCEMC, the state’s Touchstone Energy cooperatives own 56.25 percent Catawba Unit 1. In 2003, that unit was re-licensed to operate until December 2043. The license renewal process considers safety and environmental reasons in granting additional years of operations. In addition to its share in the Catawba station, NCEMC also owns diesel-powered generation stations on the Outer Banks. Both the 15-megawatt station at Buxton and the 3-megawatt station at Ocracoke provide peak-load power, and they function as backup generators during outages on Hatteras and Ocracoke islands. Currently, long-term power supply contracts with regional power providers fills the rest of the co-op energy needs.

Nuclear energy will always be an important part of the co-ops’ power supply needs, says Joe Brannan of NCEMC, mainly because diversity in energy supply helps ensure an adequate supply of electricity at a reasonable cost.

“If, as an industry, we should learn from our past, we certainly should have learned we need diversity in our fuel supply,” he said. “Without diversity, we expose ourselves to unnecessary price and availability volatility. The greater the potential sources of generation, the less likely any one source could threaten the overall ability to generate electricity.”

“Nuclear Power” continued on p. 12



The Catawba Nuclear Station in York County, S.C., began commercial operation in the mid-1980s and recently was relicensed to operate through 2043. North Carolina’s Touchstone Energy cooperatives own 56.25 percent of one of the two Catawba generating units.

▼ This diagram shows the process of a pressurized water reactor (PWR) like the two at Catawba Nuclear Station. There are also boiling water reactors (BWR) at some plants. The primary difference is that the PWR uses heat exchangers called “steam generators” to separate the primary water that is heated in the reactor core from the secondary water which is turned to steam and turns the turbines. In the BWR, the primary water is converted to steam in the reactor core and passes directly to the turbine without a barrier.

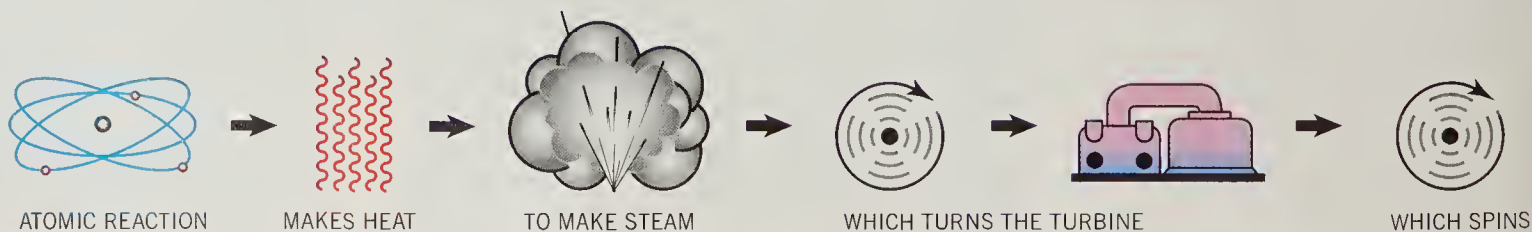
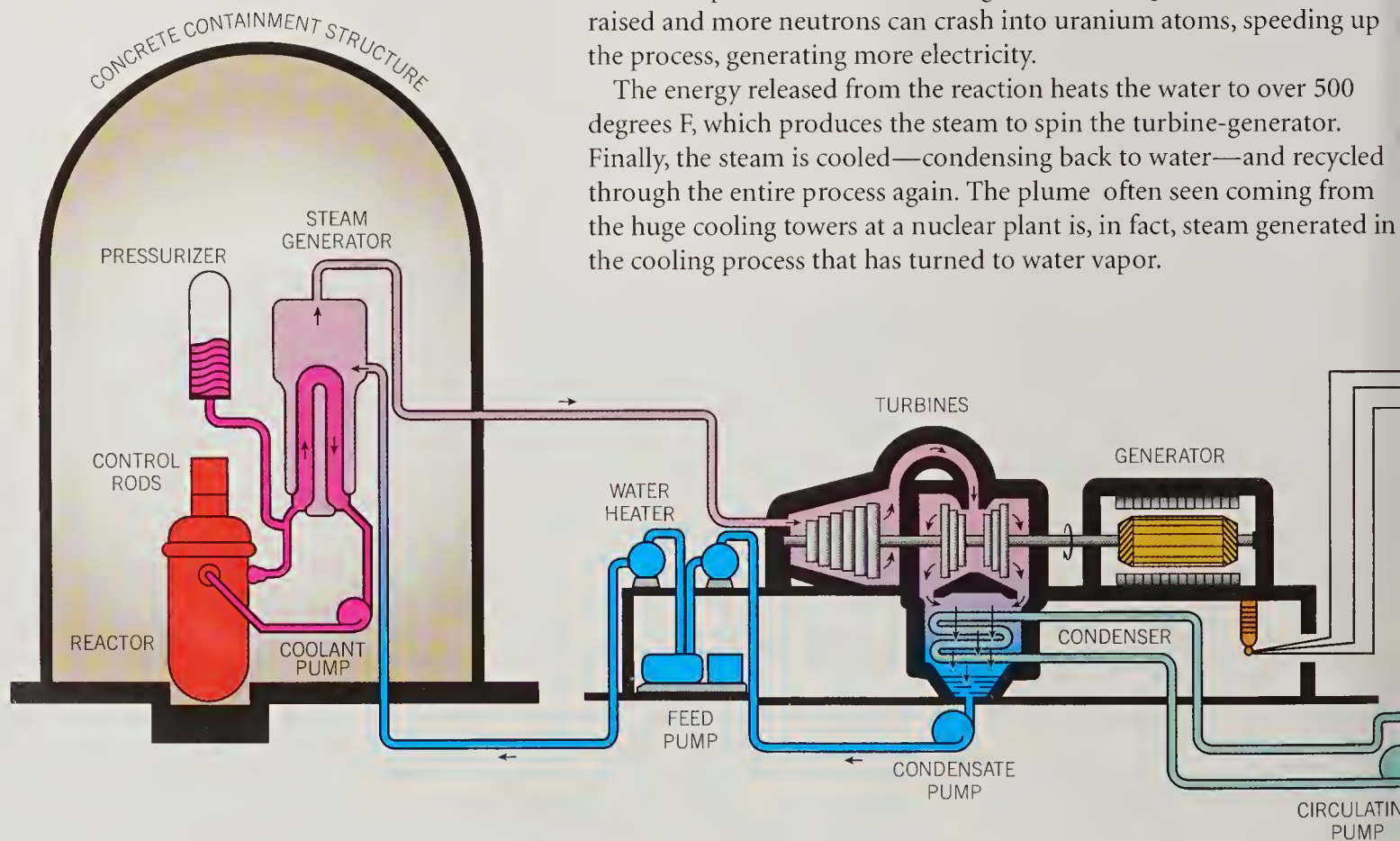
Steam leaves the containment structure (at left) and is used to turn the turbines. Condensed secondary water (shown below the turbine condenser) returns to the supply side of the steam generator. A cooling water supply—usually from a lake, river or the sea—quenches the steam after it passes through the turbine.

How a nuclear generator plant works

In most electric power plants, water is heated and converted into steam, which drives a turbine-generator to produce electricity. In fossil fuel plants, steam is generated using coal, oil or natural gas. Nuclear plants work much the same way, except that an atomic “chain reaction” inside the reactor makes the steam, which drives the turbine-generator.

In a nuclear power plant, the “fission” of uranium atoms in the reactor provides the heat that produces steam for generating electricity. “Fission” is the splitting of atoms into smaller parts. Some atoms split when they are struck by even smaller particles, called neutrons. Each time this happens more neutrons come out and strike other atoms. This process of energy release is the “chain reaction.” Operators in the plant control the chain reaction to keep it from releasing too much energy too fast so that the reaction can continue for a long period of time. The chain reaction is controlled with “control rods,” that contain the chemical element boron which naturally absorbs neutrons. When the rods are lowered into the reactor, they absorb more neutrons and the fission process slows down. To generate more power, the rods are raised and more neutrons can crash into uranium atoms, speeding up the process, generating more electricity.

The energy released from the reaction heats the water to over 500 degrees F, which produces the steam to spin the turbine-generator. Finally, the steam is cooled—condensing back to water—and recycled through the entire process again. The plume often seen coming from the huge cooling towers at a nuclear plant is, in fact, steam generated in the cooling process that has turned to water vapor.



Illustrated by Ed Vernon for Carolina Country

Learning about nuclear energy at Catawba Nuclear Station

By Jennifer Kearney



Jennifer Kearney teaches high school physics in Southern Pines.

I have been teaching high school physics in Southern Pines for more than 10 years. Although I was trained to teach math, I really enjoy teaching physics because students in that class want to know what is in the world around them and how it works. I teach a unit on "Nuclear Reactions and Power." Several of my former students went on to study nuclear engineering in college, and one did research at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

One desire of mine has been to tour a nuclear power plant and see how it really works. I have all kinds of graphs and information I share with students, but my explanation had been based mostly on what I have read or seen at the North Carolina State University Reactor.

Last summer, the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation invited me to visit Catawba Nuclear Station, which is operated by Duke Energy in York County, S.C. NCEMC has a 56.25 percent ownership of the Catawba Unit No. 1.

The control room operators at Catawba and other Duke plants work for 10 weeks and then go for two weeks of refresher training. This helps Duke maintain its accreditation with the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I was very impressed with that amount of training. The training is enhanced by an exact replica of the actual control room, and computers maintain data from the plant so they can give an actual scenario of what happens.

Catawba has two reactors in operation. I was able to touch the huge containment building where the nuclear fission reaction takes place. Water under pressure cir-

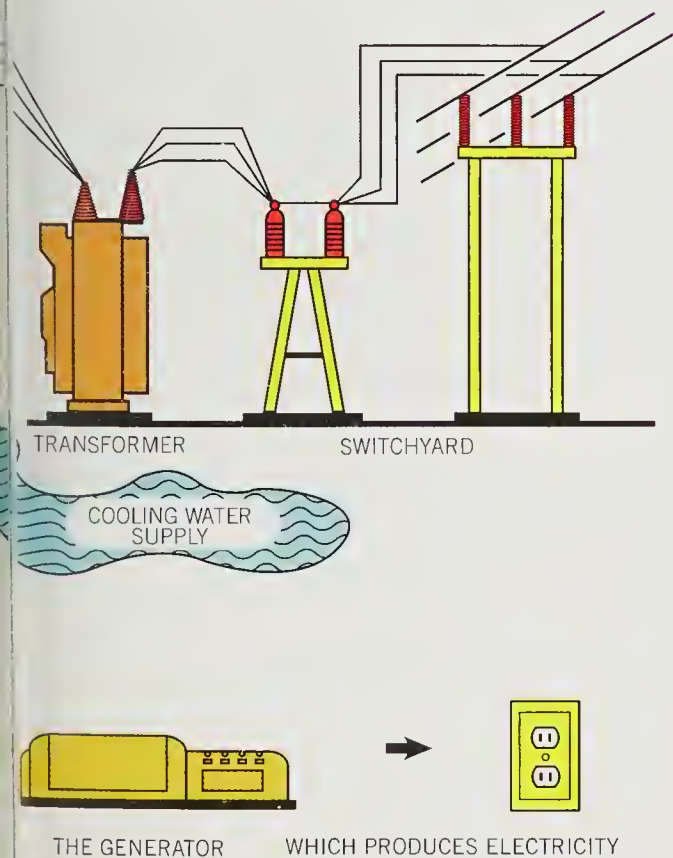
culates in the reactor housing and is heated to about 550 degrees F by the reaction. The water then circulates around other water that does not come in contact with the reaction and is heated to about 545 degrees F under pressure of 962 pounds-per-square-inch. The steam it produces turns the high-pressure turbines that generate electricity. The turbines are housed in a large building about 20 feet from the reactors.

After the steam has been through the turbine, reheated and exhausted, its heat energy declines to about 114 degrees F. The water is sent to four cooling towers where it is cooled for re-entry to Lake Wylie. Water drops from the top of the towers, while fans circulate, to cool it down to about 89 degrees.

The plant is very neat and clean. I was impressed by the organization and safeguards in place to maintain security and safety. An engineer from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is on site and has complete access to the operation.

The reactors are re-fueled every 12 to 18 months, and Catawba has set records for its quick refueling. Spent fuel is stored right there on the Catawba site until a permanent storage facility is completed.

Catawba has been recognized by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as one of the most efficient power plants in the United States. It was put into operation in 1985 and recently qualified for relicensing to 2043. All reports tell us we are going to need new energy supplies and efficient ways to produce electricity in the coming years so that we can gradually replace our dependence on fossil fuels. Nuclear energy and Catawba fit into that future. ①



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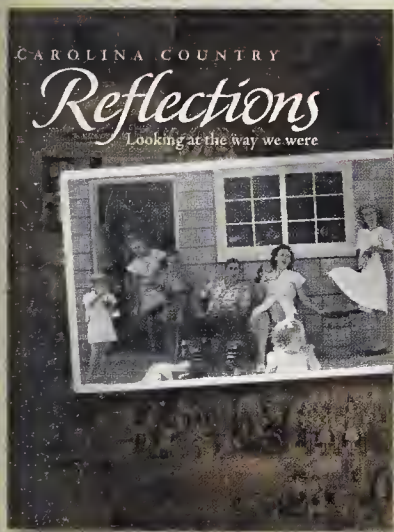


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TWO WHEELS

AND THOUSANDS OF MILES

Frances Miller has spent 40 years traveling across the country by motorcycle

Text and photo by Renee Gannon

Frances Miller feels like she's
"lived one-and-a-half lives."

Rutherford EMC's Gordon McDaniel readily admits that he is a lawn mower aficionado, which is why he wondered about the John Deere riding mower covered by a gray tarp when a perfectly good utility building set nearby at a member's home. As a member services representative for the co-op, McDaniel often visits members who have questions about bills and service. On this day, he visited Frances Miller of Union Mills in Rutherford County.

When he asked Miller about the tarp-covered mower, she replied matter-of-factly: "Oh, I keep my motorcycle in the shed." To be more precise, a candy apple red 2004 Honda 400 cc Shadow safely resides under that shed roof.

Frances Miller is 70 years old and has clocked more than 384,000 miles on a motorcycle, riding and camping mostly in solitude from coast to coast during the last 40 years. Before she hangs up the saddlebags, she hopes to reach 500,000 miles.

"I just like to go...I love it! I'd like to pack a bag and go right now if I could," she says.

IN THE BEGINNING

Miller started riding at the age of 30, when neighbors taught her on a dirt bike in Orlando, Fla. She practiced in an open grass and dirt field for months. "I didn't think he'd ever let me on the road! I just went round and round in a big circle," she laughed.

Once released from the field, Miller purchased her first motorcycle: a 185 cc Suzuki street bike. "I rode that Suzuki until 1976, when I jumped up to a big bike, a gray, 1,000 cc Moto Guzzi," she recalled. After logging 150,000 miles, she traded for another 1,000 cc Moto Guzzi in 1984, this time in black. She again rode 150,000 miles.

After a few years on the road, Miller joined an international group of

motorcycle-riding women, the Motor Maids. She would travel to annual conferences, no matter where they were held, even Canada.

In those early years, Miller and her son, Michael, would travel and camp together. He rode on the back from the age of 6 until he turned 16. "We rode to every state west of the Mississippi," she said. "People would see me going down the highway with my big bike and two sleeping bags tied over the saddlebags, and Michael sitting behind me. You could barely see him in those first few years!"

Even an accident in the early 1980s in Florida didn't discourage the traveling. Miller still doesn't remember the accident, but has a numb area on her left leg from the crash as a reminder. "The accident rung my bell and broke my arm...I guess the Lord prepared me not to see the accident so I wouldn't relive it!"

Miller averaged 20,000 miles a year for awhile. Now, she admits, it takes a few years to reach 20,000 miles. The Honda shows 8,000 miles on the odometer. Miller, who is retired and raising her 12-year-old granddaughter, Briana, has had to cut back on her traveling. But if given a chance...

ACROSS THE MILES

During the last 40 years, Frances Miller has visited almost every state in America, with the New England states not yet crossed off, and traveled to a few towns in Canada. Those missing northern states are on the agenda, and she is determined to go before she finishes her odyssey.

The trips would take one to three weeks, depending on Miller's final destination and how much time she could spend on the road. She usually preferred the scenic byways over the main highways.

For one trip, Miller took the unusual step of quitting her job to attend a convention out West. "Boss man wouldn't give me the time off so I quit and went for 30 days," she said. "Then I got my job back! He couldn't wait for me to return."


Photo albums filled with memories of various trips crowd her bookshelf. The Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, Hoover Dam and the deserts of Nevada, Indianapolis, Washington State, Oregon, Yellowstone National Park and Mt. St. Helens—a place Miller says gave her an eerie feeling when she rode past not soon after the volcano erupted. "I even made it to Madison County, Iowa, where I saw lots of covered bridges, and bought some Hee Haw overalls in Nashville." She found a place called Chimney Rock in Nevada where rock formations jut out of the ground like chimneys.

The scariest ride? Traveling on U.S. Coast Highway 1 in northern California and into Oregon, where rocks are held back by netting along one side of the road and the road goes straight down to the ocean and more rocks on the other side.

"But it was one of the most beautiful rides, too," she recalls.

One aspect of riding she has noticed over the years is how fast everyone rides these days. Says Miller: "Why speed? You can't see anything. You can't look around and enjoy the view, and that's the best part!"

Miller is itching to reach 500,000 miles. "If I had to do it all over again, I'd do it all over again. I don't want to quit. It's fun. I rode rain or shine, it didn't matter. I would just get up and go," says Miller.

She laughs when realizing that in her retirement it's not as easy to just get up and go. "When I worked, I had the money to travel, but no time. Now that I'm retired, I have the time, but no money!" 

“Oh, what a

Recycled briefs
and other gifts
that got around

The Juicer

My husband and I have been happily married for three years. On our second Christmas together, my then boyfriend was called out of town on business. He wouldn't return until after New Year's, so he left my gift and made me promise not to open it until Christmas morning.

Of course I couldn't wait until Christmas, so I opened my gift a few days early. To my utter disappointment my loving boyfriend had bought me a juicer—the most unromantic gift of all time. I was almost in tears at the thought of it.

A day before Christmas Eve my mom mentioned her interest in a new diet which involved drinking plenty of juice. I decided to re-gift the appliance and give it to my mom.

On Christmas morning my boyfriend called. I pretended to open my gift, and I faked surprise. That was when I got the shock of my life. My boyfriend asked me to marry him.

Of course I said yes to the love of my life.

At that same moment my mom walked into the room. She held the juicer in one hand and a black velvet box in the other. My boyfriend had put my ring inside the juicer, and I had given it to my mother!

Christine Williams | Sherrills Ford | EnergyUnited

“Sleeping Beauty”

While I was growing up, my mother was the head of a single parent household. I think this fact led my mom to become resourceful in response to every situation.

One weekend I was excited to be able to go to a schoolmate's birthday party. Everything was going wonderfully—games, eating excessive amounts of sweets and stashing away party favors. Then came time for the birthday girl to open her gifts. Nothing could be more shocking and troubling to me once she opened my “gift.”

She unwrapped one of *my* Disney books, “Sleeping Beauty,” I think, which was also my favorite. Needless to say, I pitched a fit and made a scene. I even demanded that she open the front cover to see my name posted and that she give it back.

Tiffany Ward | Yadkinville | EnergyUnited



nice surprise!”

The Blue Sleepers

My husband had been married previously with children. In love and respect for my ready-made-family, I made a conscious effort to get along well with the ex-wife. When she and her new husband delivered another baby I ran right out to Zayres and bought two beautiful blue sleepers. I was so happy to hear how pleased she was to receive my gift.

About a year later on the arrival of my child, my husband's ex-wife presented us with a gift as well. As I opened the gift I silently reflected on how mature we had been about getting along so well. My thoughts were short lived after all the paper was removed, and I recognized the same blue sleepers I had bought her just a year prior.

I removed the clear lid from the prepackaged box and sure enough—unbeknownst to either of us—was a Zayres tag attached to the sleeper from the inside. I knew then that she had recycled my gift because Zayres had closed its doors shortly after I made my purchase. I never confronted the ex on her tacky error, but I sure confronted my husband about it!

Angie Womack / Sanford / Central EMC

The Snake Light

My husband, Gene, was admiring the January birthday gift he just opened: a snake light. Little Annah walked in the room to see the presents and said, “Oh, you got a snake light, too. My daddy got four of those for Christmas.”

Her mother's and father's faces turned red because the gift was from them. We all laughed and agreed that the truth always comes from a little child.

Gene said, “I'm glad that y'all received so many snake lights during the holidays so you could share one with me.”

Mary Kay Cox / Four Oaks / South River EMC

The Ladies Briefs

A few years ago my daughter gave me some lovely briefs for Christmas. Since they were too brief for my mature figure, I wrapped them and gave them to my daughter-in-law for her birthday.

Imagine my surprise when the following Christmas my daughter opened her present and surprise, surprise, there in the box were the same ladies briefs—a gift from my daughter-in-law to her!

This gift had come full circle. From my daughter, to me, to my daughter-in-law, then back to the original purchaser. But she didn't know that she had bought them in the beginning. This was truly a gift that was recycled.

Margaret McManus / Wadesboro / Pee Dee EMC

The Calendars

One Christmas Eve I had a Christmas party and invited some friends over to dinner. After dinner my husband suggested we play games to win prizes and entertain our guests. But we had not planned it. All we were going to have was dinner and drinks and a little dancing. I thought about this case of calendars that I had ordered. So I started giving them out as prizes.

The next day one of the ladies who had been at the party called me and said, “Thank you so, so, so much.”

“For what?” I asked.

She said, “For that \$100 bill that you put in my calendar.”

All I could do was drop the phone and scream. If I could take it back I would!

Christal Rankins / Aulander / Roanoke Electric



Thanks to everyone who sent in stories about those awkward “re-gifting” experiences. You can see more at our Web site. Next month we'll publish stories about the diets that worked for you, or didn't. [Deadline was Nov. 15.] For other themes and rules of this series, see page 20.



The Fresh Fish

Years ago my cousin, Myrtle Outlaw, down in Camden, S.C., lived in a bad neighborhood. The people next door moved away and she prayed for a good Christian family to move in.

In a little while a family moved in, but she hadn't had time to meet them. On the next Saturday she came home from work and on the kitchen table was a dishpan of fresh fish. Her youngest son was a good fisherman, and this was the chance she was waiting for. She took half the fish out of the pan and went next door. A lady named Betty Thompson came to the door. Myrtle told her that she lived next door and had brought her some fish as a "welcome to the neighborhood" gift.

Betty burst out laughing and said that she had the same idea. It was she who brought the fish over to Myrtle's. From that day forward Myrtle and Betty were good friends, and they still laugh about their fish story.

Lula Grover / Fayetteville / South River EMC

The Cookbook

Not long after we moved into our home, family and friends gave us a housewarming. I received a lovely cookbook as a gift. I did not do much cooking back then, and I decided this would be perfect for re-gifting.

Sure enough, a couple of months later I was invited to a bridal shower. As the bride-to-be began to unwrap her gifts, she came to mine. Oh, she was so excited about her wonderful cookbook. She began to thumb through it and, lo and behold—unbeknownst to me, the person who had given it to me had written me a personal note on the inside cover. She began to read it aloud and soon realized the note had been meant for me! I began to pray for the floor to open up and for me to fall in and disappear forever.

She came to me after the party and gave the cookbook back, and we both got a good laugh. She said she had done the same thing but was fortunate enough not to get caught. I have not re-gifted since.

Pat Jarman / Jacksonville / Jones-Onslow EMC

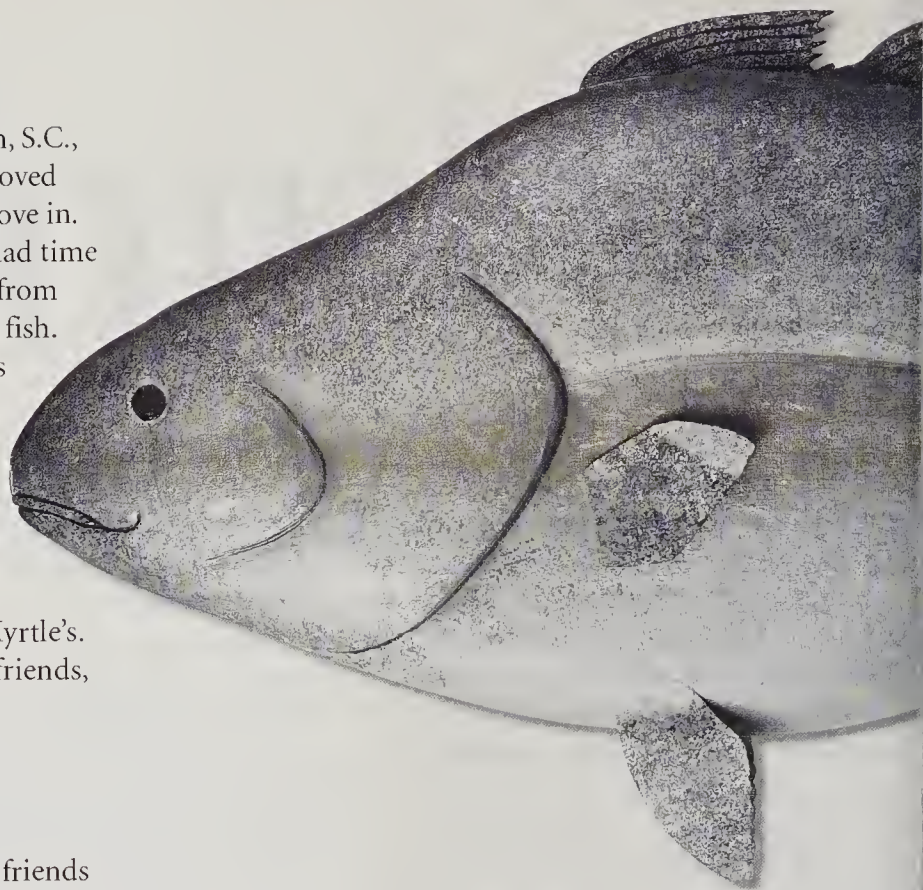
The Little Yellow Negligée

We have a downright hilarious family re-gifting tradition.

When I was only 12 or so my very conservative Southern Baptist grandma gave me a short yellow negligée for Christmas. It was a beauty with lace and a gigantic ribbon bow on the front. None of us could figure out what she was thinking, but the negligée became a longstanding family re-gifting opportunity. Eventually one of us added a large black pin to the front that said, "I have exactly what you need."

Now every few years or so we pass it around, so that one of us receives the negligée all wrapped up like a nice Christmas gift. For years we would only give it to the female members of the family. When it was opened, everyone cracked up! I am now 51, and last Christmas I decided to give it to my 76-year-old father. I want to tell you—that negligée was the hit of the gift giving at our house last year! 📌

Laura Lee Carter / Fort Collins, Colo.



Send us your best **Earn \$50**

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

February 2007 The Way We Were
Pictures from the old days, and the stories that go with them.

Deadline: December 15

March 2007 Pests and Weeds
Tell us how you control them in your garden.

Deadline: January 15

April 2007 The Dumbest Souvenir I Ever Brought Home
Where did it come from and why? Send photos, if you have them.

Deadline: February 15

May 2007 How We Saved Energy
Good ideas for home, at work, or on the road.

Deadline: March 15

June 2007 One Time at Summer Camp
Your best summer camp story. Send photos, if you have any.

Deadline: April 15

July 2007 Before Farmers Markets
Your stories of buying and selling farm products in the old days.

Deadline: May 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, e-mail co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
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9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

North Carolina's Preserve America Communities *By Ashley-Harrington Andrews*



Thomasville is known as a hard-working town proud of its industrial progress. Located in the Piedmont Triad, southwest of High Point, in eastern Davidson County, Thomasville has a population of about 20,000 and boasts as its centerpiece the world's largest chair in recognition of its furniture-making heritage.

In 2002, the city celebrated its 150th year since being founded in 1852 by the visionary businessman and politician John W. Thomas. As a state senator during the 1840s he worked tirelessly to pass the North Carolina Railroad Bill to fund a railroad system and make sure it ran through his community. By November 1855, the construction of the railroad was completed to Thomasville and the first train rolled through on its way from Goldsboro to Charlotte the following January. Just as Thomas predicted, the railroad attracted business and commerce that has not let up since.

In 1856, Thomas purchased the Glen Anna Female Seminary and built a large brick building for the institution on the east side of Thomasville, facing the railroad. The following year C.M. and G. Lines moved their leather business to Thomasville from Bush Hill (Archdale) and began manufacturing shoes. Robert Gray set up a brickyard where he made brick used in building Trinity College. Jesse Shelly came from Lenoir County and established another shoe factory.

By 1860 Thomasville counted 308 citizens. The Civil War took away many young men, which slowed commerce, but in the Reconstruction Era Thomasville was rejuvenated. Thomasville Female College became the social and cultural center throughout the 1880s. Sportsmen began coming here to shoot quail on leased lands. Gold and silver were mined. Some 20 manufacturing plants made shoes, staves, cabinets, sash and doors, saddles and harnesses, chairs, brick and leather. The Thomasville Baptist Orphanage, set up to house Civil War orphans, remains the largest orphanage in the South outside of Texas.

The furniture industry soon dominated Thomasville's business scene. D.S. Westmoreland began it all making chairs in his backyard. In 1879 Westmoreland built a factory on Randolph St., which today is home to C.M. Wall and Sons box factory. Others followed in the late 1800s with the names of Standard Chair, Climax Chair, Cramer Furniture, Lambeth Furniture, Thompson Chair, Queen Chair, Ryder Wagon Works, Thomasville Furniture and Lee Manufacturing. About 10 furniture makers were in operation by 1905.

Thomasville's population grew more than 416 percent from 1900 to 1910, bringing electricity, water and sewer systems.

Textiles, yarn and hosiery moved onto the scene in the first half of

the 20th century, with mills named Amazon and Jewell. The Great Depression hurt most everything here, but the textile industry helped prevent a complete breakdown. Still operating are Ragan Knitting, Kayby Hosiery and Fremont Hosiery.

In the early 1900s, Thomasville was home to Company L of the National Guard, whose men eventually saw duty at summer encampments at Camp Glen on the coast, then defending the Mexican border at Camp Stewart near El Paso, then merging into the U.S. Army at Camp Sevier in Greenville. In 1918, Thomasville's Company L helped to bring about the World War I armistice by participating in fierce fighting at Bellicourt (Aisne) where the Hindenburg Line was broken. Thomasville contributed to the World War II effort by sending workmen to help build planes, ships, munitions and other materials. When the war ended, Thomasville rebounded.

The famous chair in Thomasville today is actually the second. The first was built in 1922 by the Thomasville Chair Company when three men worked 20 hours a day for a week to build it. It stood 23 feet, 6 inches tall. The city in 1948 replaced it with a statue that reflects the sturdy, straight-backed chairs made here. The chair statue made of concrete in a steel skeleton is a replica of Duncan Phyfe armchair and stands 18 feet high on a 22-foot base.

Each September, the city hosts North Carolina's oldest festival, "Everybody's Day." The festival began in 1908 and today attracts some 70,000 people.

The local Historic Preservation and Tourism commissions have produced a self-guided walking tour that points to Thomasville's progressive history. 🍷

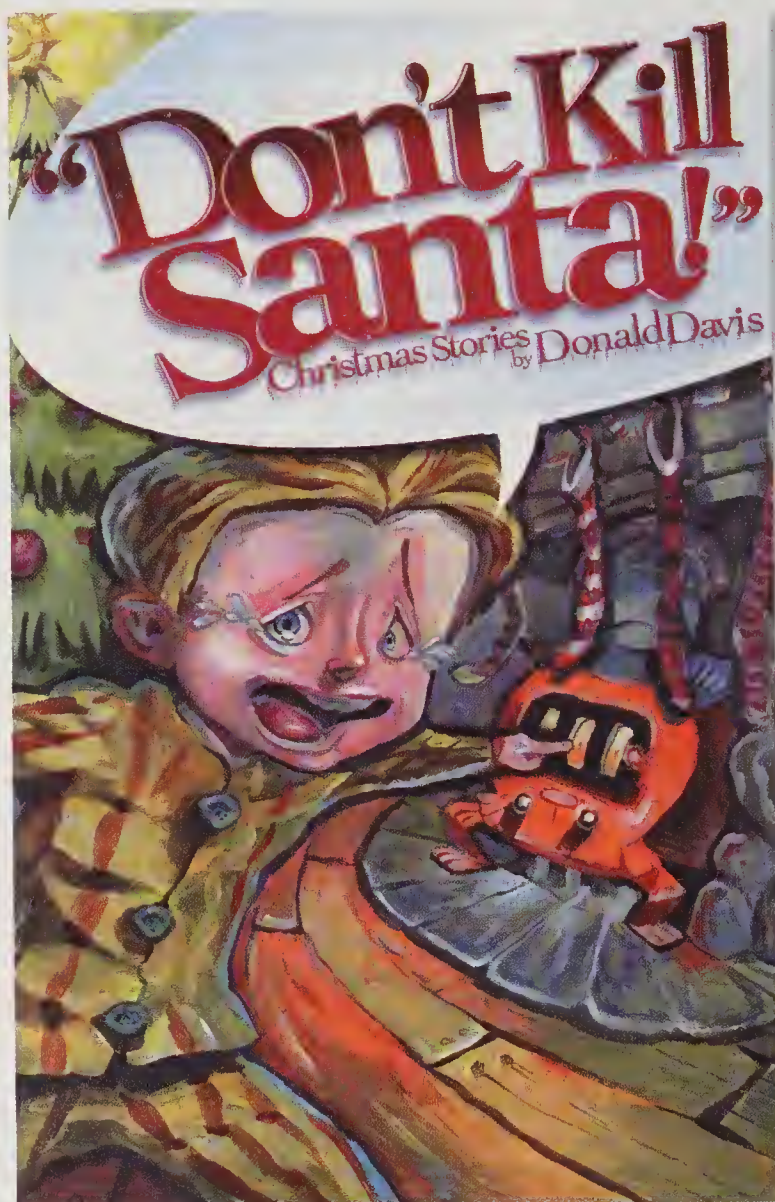
For more Information

City of Thomasville:
www.ci.thomasville.nc.us

Thomasville Tourism Commission:
www.thomasvilletourism.com

Christmas in Sulpher Springs

By Donald Davis



Christmas in Sulpher Springs was a strangely fascinating combination of two worlds, old and new. Traditional mountain customs and ancient observations formed the heart and soul of the season. At the same time, the new power of advertising and the proliferation of newspapers and radios had made us part of the “modern” world of commercialized holidays.

Generations-old gift-making traditions still lived on all over Nantahala County. But many homemade crafts had to come to town to be sold side-by-side with the Made-in-Japan junk toys so highly prized by children of all ages. Winning and losing took place even at Christmas and even in that idyllic world.

Our mother’s family began to gather as soon as school was out. Sulpher Springs was still “home” to more than a dozen aunts and uncles who had left the mountains to seek their fortunes from Chicago to Florida, but who always planned to come home...some day.

Christmas, like summertime, was a brief season of homecoming. The whole extended matriarchal family came pouring in, with more and more new little cousins each year tumbling from cars with strange license tags to push us from our own beds for two weeks and eat everything Mother had put up at the cannery the summer before...

On Christmas mornings we loaded up in the blue Dodge and went to Grandmother’s house. Grandmother and Granddaddy lived nearly twenty miles out of Sulpher Springs up on Cedar Fork Mountain. It took almost an hour to get there on the curving roads out through Bowlegged Valley and past Crabtree Creek, even though an eight-foot wide strip of road was paved nearly all the way to their house.

It was an excellent ride. In early years Mother had not learned to drive, and Daddy took advantage of that fact by driving fast enough to scare her all the way. Joe-brother and I played in the floor of the back seat, trying to get away from Daddy’s ever-present cigar smoke, which was much worse in winter when the windows were rolled up and the heater was turned on.

The last part of the drive was a two-mile climb up and over the gap in Cedar Fork Mountain. Daddy had a special little game he played with himself (and with the Dodge) on this part of the trip. The game was to see how far up Cedar Fork he could get before he had to shift the Dodge down into second gear.

As soon as we passed the sawmill below Crabtree Creek, it was time for the game to begin. From here, the road ran straight up and over Sutton Farm Hill, then down through a long dip and right up the mountain toward Cedar Fork Gap.

Daddy poured on the gas and puffed the cigar at the same time. Mother always protested, but weakly. “Don’t go too fast,” she would say, which always made him stick the accelerator right to the floor.

We topped Sutton Farm Hill at forty-five miles an hour and started down the last dip before climbing the big mountain. Daddy kept it on the floor. Joe-brother and I peeped over the seat so that we could see the speedometer. The needle climbed to fifty...fifty-five...

If you should meet another car on the narrow strip of pavement, you had to each put two wheels off in the gravel to pass safely. At this speed, that would have been totally out of the question. But here the road was straight, and Daddy could see that nothing was coming.

“Please slow down!” Mother pleaded.

Now we were pulling up the mountain, and even with the gas pedal on the floor, the Dodge was slowing down. Up, up, up the steep hill we went. Joe-brother and I could see the speedometer needle dropping. Fifty...forty-five...forty...thirty-five...

It was coming—the time we were waiting for. Up ahead was “Second Gear Curve.” That’s where it always happened:

continued on page 26

the Dodge went into second gear, and more importantly, Daddy gave his interpretation of the event for the day. Joe-brother and I were ready for it.

As the Dodge approached "Second Gear Curve," the speedometer dropped to thirty, then twenty-five. We entered the curve. It was time.

Daddy bit down on the cigar, pushed in the clutch, and threw the gearshift of the Dodge into second gear. At the same time he grinned, looked at Mother, and this time said, "This six-cylinder Dodge wouldn't pull a wet booger out of a baby's nose...with the baby blowing to boot!"

Mother only turned a little bit red this time. Some of his worst interpretations in the past had included terms like "greasy strings" and "tomcat's rear ends." A baby's booger wasn't very bad at all.

By the time all the blush had left Mother's face, we were over the top of Cedar Fork and almost to Grandmother's house.

There was a mile-long unpaved farm road that led through the woods to our grandmother's house, but we seldom drove down it to the house, especially in wintertime. Granddaddy was of that suspicious breed who regarded having company as something between a bother and an outright danger. To be sure that no wandering tourist accidentally drove down the road to his house, he simply refused to maintain it, so that he not only allowed it to erode but even dug it out at times and encouraged it to wash....

"I hope Granddaddy sees that it's relatives before he starts shooting at us," cousin George would always joke.

His mother would reassure him. "Grandmother unloads all his guns on Christmas Day."

The first job of the day was to find a Christmas tree. Granddaddy, tempered as he was, never took care of this task ahead of time. We were instructed by Grandmother to "get a big one—not a floppy cedar tree like all the neighbors get, but a white pine tree with good, strong limbs."

There was a particular reason that a white pine tree was in order rather than a cedar tree. The reason was to be found in a wooden box of unknown origin that Grandmother kept hidden in the back recesses of the wardrobe in her bedroom. The box contained her only Christmas tree decorations: a set of twenty-three wooden candleholders—had there once been an even two dozen?—mounted on clips like short clothespins. These could be clipped to the Christmas tree... if the limbs were strong and well spaced.

The candleholders were varnished, unpainted natural wood. No one knew where they came from, whether they were homemade or bought. Grandmother had simply inherited them from her mother. The reason for the white pine

was clear: a cedar, with its limber branches and close-spaced foliage, would never work. The limbs wouldn't support the weight, and the candles would set the tree on fire. White pine was perfect. It had stiff, strong limbs, spaced far enough apart and graduated so that the candles were stable and safe.

Each year Mother would bring twenty-three fresh white candles to go on the tree. While we were tramping after Daddy and the uncles in search of the proper tree, Mother and the aunts would clean off the old wax and fit the new candles into the holders.

As soon as we found a tree everyone agreed on (it never took very long), one of the uncles would cut it down with a handsaw, flush with the ground, after which we would drag it back to the house and another uncle would nail crossed

pieces of plank to the bottom to make it stand up.

Now it was time to decorate. The adults clipped on the candleholders. Each person got to pin one on the tree, after which they fussed like children over who got to put on the extras. Everyone had a different memory as to "who did it last year."

While this was going on, Grandmother was in the kitchen with the children. She would get out an egg-beater, a big crockery mixing bowl, and a box of Ivory

Snow flakes bought especially for this occasion. We would put a tiny bit of water into the mixing bowl, add some Ivory Snow flakes, and watch her beat it into mountains of whipped "snow." Then we children would frost the white pine tree with several bowls of this bubbly snow, which, when it dried, actually looked like a frosting of dry, midwinter snowflakes.

The finished tree was all green and white. The grownups would light the candles, under Grandmother's direction, a few minutes at a time, then blow them out for fear that, unwatched, they would set the tree (and that meant the whole log house!) on fire. Even Granddaddy had to "allow as how it was a purty tree." ❶

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From "Don't Kill Santa:" Christmas Stories by Donald Davis," published by August House. Hardcover, 112 pages, \$14.95. Call (800) 284-8784 or visit www.augusthouse.com

Donald Davis grew up in western North Carolina, which is the backdrop for many stories taking place in his so-named Sulphur Springs community of Nantahala County. As a professional storyteller, Donald has been featured at the World's Fair, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Storytelling Festival, and as guest host on National Public Radio's "Good Evening." He lives on Ocracoke Island and is a member of Tideland EMC.

*"I hope Granddaddy sees
that it's relatives before
he starts shooting at us,"*

cousin George would always joke.

HEATING COSTS

Tips to help
manage costs

By Kim Whorton Tripp, Contributing writer

Heating costs can account for 25 to 50 percent of a home's total energy expense. Another 14 percent of a home's energy usage is used to heat water. Here are some tips to help you manage your winter energy costs:

1. Set the thermostat at 68 degrees or the lowest temperature you find comfortable. For every degree you lower the thermostat, you can gain as much as a three percent savings in energy costs.
2. Clean your system's filters periodically. A dirty system deteriorates performance and increases operating time. Filters should be changed every one to three months.
3. Use a programmable thermostat, which saves you money by consistently turning up the thermostat when you're away. You may set different temperatures for your home depending on whether you're at work, at home, or in bed at night.
4. Clean air registers, baseboard heaters and radiators as needed. Keep heat vents open and unobstructed.
5. Place heat resistant radiator reflectors between exterior walls and the radiators.
6. Check the insulation in your attic, ceilings, floors, exterior and basement walls or crawlspace to make sure it's at recommended levels for your area. If it's not adequate, have insulation professionally installed.
7. Insulate heating ducts to prevent heat loss. Insulating the hot water heater and hot water pipes can also provide significant energy savings.
8. Keep heated air inside the home. Caulk and weather strip around doors and windows, close the fireplace damper and fill holes and gaps where wiring and pipes enter the house.
9. Use kitchen, bath and other ventilation fans only as long as needed. In just one hour, these fans can pull out a houseful of warmed air.
10. Maintain your equipment to prevent problems. To keep your system at peak performance, maintenance should be done annually by a professional.
11. Select energy-efficient equipment when you buy new heating and cooling equipment. Look for the Energy Star label.
12. Keep draperies and shades on your south-facing windows open during the day to allow sunlight into your home.
13. If you have a gas or oil furnace, consider adding a high-efficiency heat pump. It could save you a substantial amount in heating (and cooling) costs.

By implementing these tips, you can keep your house warm and save money on your heating costs.



Set the thermostat at 68 degrees or the lowest temperature you find comfortable. For every degree you lower the thermostat, you can gain as much as a three percent savings in energy costs.

Energy Star

Certain telltale signs indicate it's time to replace cooling equipment or improve parts of your system to enhance performance. It may be time to call a professional contractor to help you make a change if:

1. Your heating equipment is 10 years old or more. New Energy Star labeled equipment uses 25 to 40 percent less energy than typical 10-year-old models.
2. Your equipment needs frequent repairs and your bills are increasing.
3. Your system turns on and off frequently. This can indicate that your heating system is not the right size.
4. Some of your rooms are too hot or too cold. Improper equipment operation or duct problems could be the cause.
5. Your home has humidity problems.
6. Your home has excessive dust. Leaky ducts can pull particles and air from attics and crawlspaces. Sealing your ducts could be a solution.
7. Your cooling system is noisy.

Visit www.energystar.gov/coolchange to see if there are special deals or financing on Energy Star labeled products available from retailers, utilities or manufacturers in your area. ⓘ

Sources

www.energystar.gov

John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management. www.srmi.biz. Author of numerous energy efficiency books including *Surviving the Seasons* and *Residential Energy: Cost Savings and Comfort for Existing Buildings*

"We Care" quilts

preserve black gospel music traditions

By Ashley-Harrington Andrews

"They always say there's no mistake in a quilt," says Eunice Mildred Haywood. After more than 60 years of quilting, she should know.

Growing up in Raleigh as the fifth child in a family of six sisters and four brothers, Eunice remembers that whenever her aunt would sit down at her sewing machine she would give Eunice scraps, fabrics, needle and thread to do hand sewing. Later, when her daughter, Millicent, went off to Tennessee State University, Millicent asked her mother to make her a quilt, to make it easier on her while she was away from home. Eunice pieced and quilted that first one by hand, finishing it during Millicent's sophomore year. She named it "Broken Dishes" to describe the quilt's pattern. She was surprised when people complimented her on it. At flea markets, when Millicent would lay the quilt over her car to hold items on display, people asked if the quilt itself was for sale.

Eunice Haywood's quilts continue to impress people. Two have been displayed in the art department at North Carolina State University. The one called "Sisters" shows silhouettes of six women in traditional African dress. Inspired by her own five sisters, the quilt distinguishes each woman by her earrings, reflecting how similar all six sisters look in real life. The other, "Queens on a Journey," also has figures of black women in traditional African dress and headdresses. Her other quilts include "Hats," Kwanzaa holiday quilts and lap quilts.

Still quilting at age 73, Eunice works on one when the mood strikes her. "As you begin working, you begin creating, too, and you never quite know how it's going to turn out," she says. During the process, she usually does something she didn't expect to do. That element of surprise keeps her



Inspired by her own five sisters, Eunice Haywood's "Sisters" quilt has been displayed in the art department at North Carolina State University.

interested as she goes along and makes each finished quilt an individualized work of art. "There are no limits as to what you can do," she says.

Eunice lives in Wake Forest and is a member of the Wake Electric cooperative. One of her brothers passed away, but her other siblings live in Raleigh. In addition to Millicent, she has a son, Chesley, and a 19-year-old grandson, Javian.

Quilts and gospel music

Eunice Haywood is as devoted to gospel music as she is to quilting. She combined her passions in 2000 when she and Millicent formed "We Care," dedicated to preserving black gospel quartet music by drawing attention to the music through a series of "Signature Quilts." The "Signature Quilts" contain the names and signatures of black gospel musicians and fans. Each quilt has 122 square blocks colored in shades of red and white. One block designates the year it was made. Another is a "Remember Me" block, representing Eunice herself. Some of the blocks contain scripture verses, and on others the musicians signed their names.

Eunice says that while making the quilt, creating the pattern was not as hard as obtaining the signatures. But the signatures are the heart of the quilt, she says. "A signature is part of a person and nobody has a signature like yours. So that's one reason why all the blocks are different." Most signatures are from North Carolina gospel artists, but others came from musicians in Mississippi, Tennessee and South Carolina.

Quilts are a perfect medium for helping to preserve the history of gospel music, Eunice says. Like the songs that gospel musicians and singers have performed for generations, she says, "quilts tell a story and they outlive us." 📌

Ashley-Harrington Andrews will graduate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this month.

Gospel Music in Raleigh Dec. 10

On Dec. 10, "We Care" will sponsor a concert to raise awareness of gospel music and raise money for more quilts and concerts. The concert will be held in Hines Auditorium at St. Augustine's College in Raleigh at 5 p.m. Two "Signature to a Preservation" quilts will be on display. One will be raffled while the other will travel to workshops, conferences, concerts and exhibitions. Performing will be Slim and the Supreme Angels, plus Johnnie Faison & the Gospel Tones and George Dickens & the Disciples. For information and tickets, call (919) 271-2119 or (919) 418-1867.

To donate or get involved with preserving gospel music, contact Eunice Haywood, 318 East Pine Ave., Wake Forest, NC 27587. Or call Carolina Country at (919) 875-3091, or e-mail editor@carolinacountry.com



O' Christmas Tree, O' Christmas Tree

If you like going out to scenic farms to pick out your Christmas tree, there are plenty of places to choose from. The North Carolina Christmas tree industry is ranked second in the nation in number of trees harvested. The North Carolina Christmas Tree Association, headquartered in Boone and served by Blue Ridge EMC, has guides on its Web site for locating "choose & cut" Christmas tree farms, along with growers who offer mail-order trees. There's also a phone number for folks to call if they have trouble accessing the Web site. Note: For the holidays, the Association is donating at least 1,250 free North Carolina Christmas trees to the "Trees for Troops" program. The N.C. trees will be sent to Camp Lejeune, Cherry Point Air Base and Fort Bragg for servicemen's families.

(800) 562-8789

www.ncchristmastrees.com



Parkway trail maps

One place to obtain hiking maps is through the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation's online store. Most sell for \$9.95. Maps with free shipping include Cherokee and Pisgah National Forest; French Broad and Nolichucky Rivers; South Holston and Watauga Lakes; Covington/Alleghany Highlands Trails; and Linville Gorge/Mt. Mitchell: Pisgah National Forest. The maps show trails, campsites and recreational features. There are also maps for Virginia areas, including the Shenandoah National Park and Blacksburg/ New River Valley. The Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation was incorporated in North Carolina in 1997 as an independent, private nonprofit. It provides private funding for specific programs and projects that further the preservation, protection and enhancement of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

(828) 265-4026

www.blueridgeparkwaystore.com

Pepper Dog Salsa

Pepper Dog is a mixed breed of tomatoes, cilantro, garlic and spices blended to a smooth consistency. It is made without vinegar or onions found in traditional salsas, and contains no preservatives or additives. The difference is in the heat, according to the Apex-based company. Pepper Dog salsas come in mild, medium and hot and are sold at many North Carolina stores, including Blowing Rock Market in Blowing Rock, Dean and Deluca in Charlotte, Good Life Gourmet in Nags Head, Temptations in Wilmington and Whole Foods (various locations). There's also a dry rub available that's made of ground spices, smoky chili powder and herbs. Suggested retail price for the salsa is \$3.95 for the 9-ounce container and \$6.95 for 16-ounce, and \$4.95 for the rub. Gift crates with three 9-ounce jars (1 mild, 1 medium, and 1 hot) sell for \$15.

(919) 367-8485

www.pepperdogsalsa.com



Butterfields candy

The Butterfields candy people say the candy they sell today is basically the same candy that J.W. first made in 1924. The company, based in Nashville, N.C., sells an assortment of hard candies, including peach, lemon, cherry, grape and grapefruit flavors. Items that come in Christmas tins include Jingle Bursts (peppermint flavor), Naughty or Nice Buds (cranberry and orange) and Wish Buds (holiday assortment). They all sell for \$12.99, 16 ounces. Peach Buds sell for \$1.90 each and come in a retro design tin. Other sizes and items are available.

(800) 945-5957

www.butterfieldscandy.com



The Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree Store

This unique store in Spruce Pine sells an array of handmade items made locally. The store, served by French Broad EMC, offers products such as pottery, weavings, glass, iron, food products, textiles, cards and even lumps of coal. The coal lumps are made by a special group of young people, the Exceptional Children's Class at Mitchell High School. Their lumps of coal are also sold in Mast General Store. The Home of the Perfect Christmas Tree Store takes its name from a children's story. Staff hopes to start selling online in December.

(828) 765-0571

www.homeofthepperfectchristmastree.org

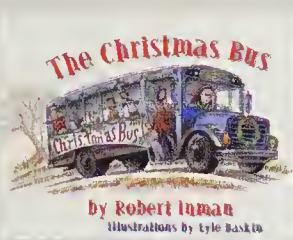


on the bookshelf

"The Christmas Bus"

Set at the Peaceful Valley Orphanage, this holiday story tells of Mrs. Frump and her rowdy kids. Mrs. Frump decides to find holiday homes for her orphans. Trouble ensues, however, when the local busybodies and suspicious Sheriff Snodgrass intervene, and a simple bus ride turns into a harum-scarum adventure. Book by Robert Inman, who lives in Charlotte and Boone. Illustrated by Lyle Baskin, who lives in western N.C. Published by John F. Blair in Winston-Salem. Hardcover, 84 pages, \$19.95.

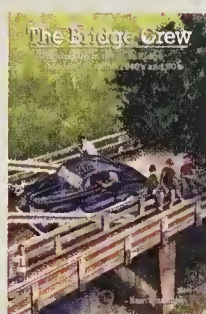
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"The Bridge Crew"

Set in a time before television, video games and computers, this story recounts a group of kids growing up in a Blue Ridge village. The kids were named The Bridge Crew because they met on a pedestrian walkway under a canopy of huge sycamore trees. Their activities included antics such as building huge spider webs and oiling the tracks before "The Virginia Creeper" left the Warrensville depot. Sam Shumate, who lives in Warrenville, is the author. "The Bridge Crew: Growing Up in the Blue Ridge Mountains in the 1940s and 50s" is published by Parkway Publishers in Boone but available through John F. Blair in Winston-Salem. Softcover, 158 pages, \$19.95.

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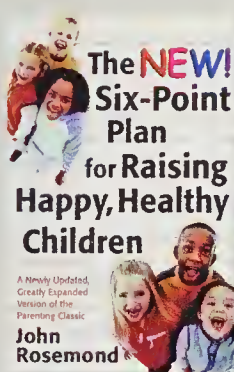


Raising Happy Children

"The New Six-Point Plan for Raising Happy, Healthy Children" is a new, updated and expanded version of the book by family psychologist and columnist John Rosemond.

Rosemond, who works in Gastonia, encourages parents to return to fundamental techniques, and believes in reminding parents that they are their children's leaders, not friends. Divided into six chapters, the plan outlines issues of child-rearing, such as self-esteem, discipline, chores and television. Published by Andrews McMeel Publishing in Kansas City, Mo. Hardcover, 308 pages, \$24.95. The book is sold or can be ordered at chain and independent booksellers, as well as some online book retailers.

www.rosemond.com



"SWAG: Southern Women Aging Gracefully"

Are you a SWAG? Do you feel the urge to bake a pound cake after reading an obituary? Have you monogrammed your shower curtain? If you are still uncertain as to your SWAG status, Melinda Rainey Thompson explains it in her new book. Thompson chronicles the everyday etiquette and eccentricities of a woman's life in the South, and celebrates Southern food and motherhood. Topics include swimsuit shopping, squirrel battling, magnolia theft, cemetery etiquette and surviving a family reunion. Published by John F. Blair in Winston-Salem. Softcover, 256 pages, \$14.95.

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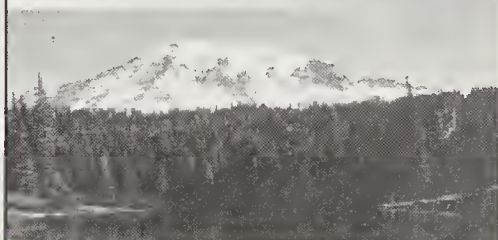


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YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN

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From Tommy Stallings, Belvidere

The popular section of the magazine called "You know you're from Carolina Country if..." seems to attract an endless supply of observations and ideas. A good many of them don't require you to be from Carolina Country, but more accurately place you in Carolina Country. Recent examples include "you can't get a cell phone signal," and "you run your barbecue cooker through a car wash."

So, in addition to telling us how you know that you're from Carolina Country, tell us that "You know you're in Carolina Country if..." We'll alternate running the two sections.

—The Editors



From Tommy Stallings, Belvidere

- ... You install security lights on your house and garage, then leave both unlocked.
- ... You have only five spices: salt, pepper, Texas Pete, Tabasco and ketchup.
- ... The local papers cover national and international news on one page, but require six pages for local gossip and sports.
- ... You know all four seasons: Almost Summer, Summer, Still Summer and Christmas.
- ... Going to Wal-Mart is a favorite past time known as "goin' Wal-Martin'."
- ... You don't need driver's ed. If your mama says you can drive, you can drive.

From Lori Locklear, Maxton

- ... You cook guinea and rice instead of chicken and rice.
- ... You find out your wife is your second cousin and no one cares.
- ... Your mama asks you to walk over yonder to fetch some eggs from your neighbor who lives two miles down the dirt road.
- ... Your Grandpa borrows your Grandma's teeth to eat an ear of corn.

From Janice Mobley, Pink Hill

- ... You leave your summer and winter clothes mixed up in your closets.
- ... You hear a siren and go out on the front porch to listen and see whose house it's at, then call them to see what's going on up there.
- ... Your father-in-law has pigs named Pork Chop and Ham Hock, turkeys named Thanksgiving and Christmas, and a dog named Butterbean.
- ... Your husband's friends come by and see the new animal ornaments in your yard and say, "Oh boy! New targets!"

From Cotisha White, Edenton

- ... At night around 10:30 or 11 either your mama or papa sits in a chair in front of TV and starts nodding.
- ... You have a Kool-Aid pitcher and a tea pitcher.
- ... You walk out your back door and see farm land.
- ... You wait for all the tires on your car to go bad before you get new ones.
- ... Nobody sits in the living room except the people from your church or your job.
- ... You and your neighbor share a clothesline.

From Krista Spivey, Dallas

- ... You and your boyfriend go on a date riding a combine and looking at soybean fields.
- ... Your favorite meat is deer jerky.
- ... Your Mawmaw insists that you eat something green during a meal.
- ... Your favorite meal is an ear of corn, a mater sandwich and a slice of cucumber.
- ... The only clothes you wear are Wrangler and Carhartt.
- ... You have a head-to-toe camouflage outfit.
- ... You've pushed your best friend's four-wheeler out of the mud.

From Beverly Long, Hertford

- ... You call tomatoes "tomaders."
- ... You spend your Fourth of July diggin' taters.
- ... Your grandparents say they'll be here "prednigh."
- ... You have deer and bear in your backyard.
- ... You have a barn or a shop mainly just to party in.

From Carolyn Hager, Polkville

- ... You can buy livermush and barbecue slaw at your local store.
- ... You pronounce Rutherfordton "Refton."
- ... You're at a picnic where home-made tomato soup and cornbread is all there is to eat.

From Gwendolyn Holmes, Youngsville

- ... After a good meal, you say, "I'm stuffed as a bullfrog."
- ... Your community has at least one big mouth know-it-all.
- ... About 90 percent of your church is your family.
- ... You're eating an animal with pellets or buckshot in it and your daddy says, "Just eat 'round it."
- ... At family reunions you meet cousins you didn't know you had.
- ... When you visit a city or a foreign location you don't like it, "not one bit."
- ... Your grandparents consider "dang" bad language.
- ... You use leftover Halloween pumpkins for target practice. (H)

If you know any that we haven't published, send them to:



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Getting To Know...

Margaret Maron

Born: Born in Greensboro, Maron grew up on her family's farm in Johnston County.

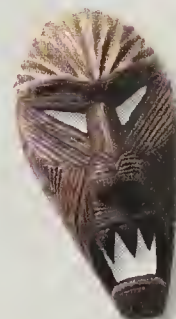
Known for: Award-winning mystery book author.

Accomplishments: Maron's works have been translated into seven languages and are on the reading lists of various courses in contemporary Southern literature. They have also been nominated for every major award in the American mystery field. They include a 12-book series about character Deborah Knott, including "Home Fires and High Country Fall," and an eight-book series on character Sigrid Hard, including "Death in Blue Folders" and "Past Imperfect." She also has published short stories in Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, McCall's, Redbook and Reader's Digest. Maron is a founding member of Sisters in Crime and served as a president of Mystery Writers of America. Her new book, "Winter's Child," the 12th novel about Judge Knott, was launched this past fall. Maron, who attended Woman's College (now UNC-Greensboro) and UNC-Chapel Hill, has described her novels set in the state as "love letters to North Carolina." They frequently involve issues confronting the state, such as race relations, real-estate development, the environment and the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs.



Do You Know...

North Carolina has the largest Indian population east of the Mississippi River?



There are more than 80,000 Native Americans living in North Carolina. The Eastern Band of Cherokee is federally recognized. Tribes that North Carolina recognizes include Lumbee, the Indians of Person County, Coharie, Haliwa-Saponi, Meherrin and Waccamaw-Siouan. Indian organizations include the Guilford Native American Association, Cumberland County Association for Indian People and Metrolina Native American Association.

Q: In older times, what did North Carolina Indians live in?

A: Not teepees. Most lived in small buildings. The frame was made from wooden poles tied together, and the walls and roof were made from reed mats or sheets of tree.



Field Trip Fun MUSEUM & PLANETARIUM

Located on 55 acres of land along the Neuse River in Kinston, the Neuseway Nature Park offers a nature center, planetarium and health & science museum. At the museum, there's a giant



pendulum, an instructive "Operation" game and a replica of the mouth, stomach and intestines that kids can crawl through. At the nature center, kids can get their hands wet exploring a saltwater

touch tank alive with crabs, sea

urchins and a starfish. At the Underground Cave, there are live turtles, iguanas, bearded dragons, frogs, mineral exhibits, crayfish and aquariums filled with fish from the local Neuse River. Exhibits of plants and animals indigenous to North Carolina include live snakes, flying squirrels, talking birds, beavers, bears and bobcats. Field trips are \$1 per person. For the museum, call (252) 939-3302. For the nature center, call (252) 939-3367. To learn more, e-mail tls0815@ecu.edu or visit www.neusewaypark.com/index.html.

Surf it!

www.margaretmaron.com

www.500nations.com/North_Carolina_Tribes.asp

www.learnnc.org/students/4/topics/indians-4

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chuckle**

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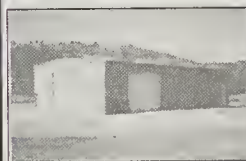
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1
A

4 5 7 1 2 6 2 8 8 0
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You could look it up

And to all—Good Night!

A meretricious* Christmas tree is so called when it's gaudily decorated to the gilt—and if it ain't, it oughta be.

—cgj

*meretricious: attracting attention in a gaudy manner; meretricious ornamentation.

Say Watt?

Seasoned Greeting

O	N	E	P
O	T	O	N
I	D	N	U
L	T	!	S
C	H	S	A
R	I	M	T

Starting with the D and ending with the exclamation point, move from letter to adjacent letter in any direction to spell out this Seasoned Greeting.

D _____ !

Domi-no.S

V	W	A	V	H	Y	R	A	V	A
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

"Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight."

Letters stand for digits in this multiplication problem. Given E=2, can you replace the missing digits?

X	2
E	

2		2					2		2
E	V	E	R	Y	W	H	E	R	E

For answers, please see page 34.

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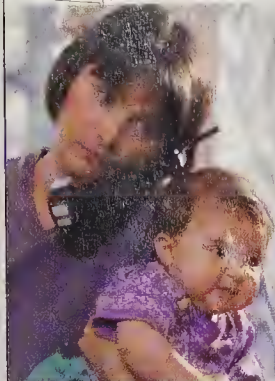
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SAMPLE LOAN	PAYMENT	TERM	RATE*	APR
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\$100,000	\$591.54	30 YR. Fixed	5.87*	6.04%
\$150,000	\$887.31	30 YR. Fixed	5.87*	5.99%
\$200,000	\$1,104.41	5 YR ARM	5.25***	5.39%
\$200,000	\$666.50	Power Arm	1.25***	6.52%

* Fixed Rate conforming loans for 70 LTV rate/term refinance/purchase transactions. ** Interest Only home equity loan, 80 LTV. Interest only payments for up to 10 years. Principle payments can be made at any time without penalty. *** ARM loans for 70 LTV rate/term refinance/purchase transactions. Power Arm payment adjusts annually while rate adjusts monthly. All rates and terms subject to differ as market conditions change. Other Rates, Terms and Products available. Call about Cash Out, Debt Consolidation, JUMBO Loans and more.



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VMVHVYRAVA x E = EVERMYWHERE
Domi-No.S

December Events



Celebrate the holidays southern plantation-style on December 2 at the Historic Stagville Christmas event in Durham. Costumed interpreters, crafts, cooking demonstrations and music run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Call (919) 620-0120 or visit www.historicstagvillefoundation.org.

MOUNTAINS

Street Dances

Mondays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Music on Main Street

Fridays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Tree Fest & Christmas Crafts

Through Dec. 28,
West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787

Gertrude Smith Open House

Through Dec. 23, Mount Airy
(336) 789-4636

Old Fashioned Christmas

Dec. 1, Hendersonville
(828) 697-2022

Wilmington Village

Wickens Festival
Dec. 1-3, Asheville
(328) 274-8788

Christmas at
Historic Johnson Farm
Dec. 2, Hendersonville
(828) 891-6585

Christmas Boat Parade
& Fireworks
Dec. 2, Lake Lure
(877) 386-4255

Twilight Tour
Dec. 2, Brevard
(828) 884-4209

Appalachian Potters Market
Dec. 2, Marion
(828) 652-8610

Hometown
Christmas Celebration
Dec. 2, Murphy
(828) 837-6821

Holiday Tour
Dec. 2-3, Mount Airy
(336) 786-6116
tourism@visitmayberry.com

Holiday Tour of Homes
Dec. 2-3, Andrews
(828) 321-3584

Fireside Sale
Dec. 3, Brasstown
(828) 837-2775
www.folkschool.org

Poinsettia Display
Dec. 3, King
(336) 983-4107
www.mitchellsnurseryandgreenhouse.com

Christmas by Lamplight
Dec. 5 & 7, Pinnacle
(336) 325-2298
www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/horne/horne.htm

"The Nutcracker"
Dec. 7-10, Asheville
(828) 257-4530

Cherryholmes in Concert
Dec. 7, Morganton
(828) 438-5294
www.ci.morganton.nc.us

"The Best Christmas
Pageant Ever"
Dec. 8-17, Hendersonville
(828) 693-0731

Christmas at the
Old Kentucky Home
Dec. 9, Asheville
(828) 253-8304

Christmas Parade
Dec. 9, Andrews
(828) 321-4377

Craft Fair
Dec. 9, Albemarle
(704) 984-9415

The Embers Christmas Show
Dec. 12, Spindale
(828) 286-9990
www.foundationshows.org

The Embers
Dec. 14, Morganton
(828) 438-5294
www.ci.morganton.nc.us

Christmas Drive Thru
Dec. 15-17, Hendersonville
(828) 692-2944

Christmas at Connemara
Dec. 16, Flat Rock
(828) 693-4178

"The Nutcracker"
Dec. 16, Spindale
(828) 245-0400
www.foundationshows.org

New Year's Eve Experience
Dec. 31, Flat Rock
(828) 696-9094

Downtown Countdown 2007
Dec. 31, Asheville
(828) 259-5800

Possum Drop
Dec. 31, Brasstown
(828) 837-3797

PIEDMONT

New Lawn Art
Through December, Charlotte
(704) 332-5535
www.mccollcenter.org

Singing Christmas Tree
Through Dec. 3, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.snydermbc.com/concert_series.html

"A Christmas Carol"
Through Dec. 10, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186
www.gilberttheater.com



Catch the "Monet In Normandy" exhibit at the N.C. Museum of Art. January 14, 2007 is the exhibit's last day. Call (919) 839-6262 or visit www.ncartmuseum.org.

Christmas Spectacular
Through Dec. 17, Sanford
(919) 774-4512
www.templeshows.com

Encouraging American Genius: Master Paintings
Through Dec. 31, Charlotte
(704) 337-2009
www.mintmuseum.org

"Design Made in Africa"
Through Jan. 6, Charlotte
(704) 332-5535
www.mccollcenter.org

Springs & Sprockets
Through Jan. 7, Durham
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmis.org

The Columbus Code: Shipwrecked artifacts
Through Jan. 7, Raleigh
(919) 807-7943
www.ncmuseumofhistory.org

Contemporary NC Photography
Through Feb. 11, 2007, Raleigh, (919) 839-6262
www.ncartmuseum.org

"Women in Motorcycling History—1905–1955"
Through Spring 2007, Maggie Valley
(828) 926-6266
www.wheelsthroughtime.com

Beyond the Pulpit
Through Aug. 5, 2007, High Point, (336) 883-3022
www.highpointmuseum.org

A Homeschool Christmas
Dec. 1, Huntersville
(704) 875-23112
www.lattaplantation.org

Holiday Lights
Dec. 1–21, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.bragg.army.mil/18abn/museums.htm

"A Christmas Carol"
Dec. 1–10, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186
www.gilberttheater.com

Historic Stagville Christmas
Dec. 2, Durham
(919) 620-0120
www.historicstagvillefoundation.org

Celebrating the Season
Dec. 2, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-7300
www.oldsalem.org

"Amahl and the Night Visitors"
Dec. 2, Durham & Dec. 9, Chapel Hill
(919) 880-1336
www.LongLeafOpera.org

"A Camelot Christmas"
Dec. 2–3, Raleigh
(919) 755-8004
www.ncrenfaire.com

Homemade Holiday Bazaar
Dec. 2, Roanoke Rapids
(252) 535-2835
www.halifaxarts.com

Golden Christmas Celebration
Dec. 2, Midland
(704) 721-4653
www.reedmine.com

Cape Fear Botanical Gardens
Dec. 2, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.capefearbg.org

Craft Show
Dec. 2–3, Hillsborough
(919) 245-3330
www.theshopsatdanielboone.com

Candlelight Tour
Dec. 3, Hillsborough
(919) 732-8156
www.candlelighttour.com

Candlelight Loft Tours
Dec. 3, Fayetteville
(910) 483-6009
www.womansclubfay.com

Twelve Days of Christmas
Dec. 3–6, Chapel Hill
(919) 913-1010
www.carolinainn.com

Holiday Parade
Dec. 4, Winston-Salem
(336) 777-3663

Craft Show
Dec. 4–9, Gastonia
(704) 867-8866

Moravian Tradition of Gifts
Dec. 6, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-7300
www.oldsalem.org

Carden Farms Art & Gift Show
Dec. 7–10, Franklinton
(919) 570-0745
www.cardenfarmssoap.com

SciWorks' Holiday Open House
Dec. 8, Winston-Salem
(336) 767-6730
www.sciworks.org

"The Nutcracker"
Dec. 8–10, Fayetteville
(910) 485-4965

Santa Train
Dec. 8–10, 15–17, 21 & 22, Durham, (919) 220-5429
www.lifeandscience.org

Candlelight Christmas
Dec. 9, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Bob Timberlake Open House
Dec. 9, Lexington
(336) 224-3020
www.bobtimberlake.com

Holiday House Tour
Dec. 9–10, Chapel Hill
(919) 942-7818
www.chapelhillpreservation.com

Open House at the Bryant House
Dec. 9–10, Moore County
(910) 692-2051

Open House
Dec. 9–10, Carthage
(910) 947-7014
<http://moorehistory.com>

Handel's Messiah
Dec. 10, Fayetteville
(910) 672-1571
www.uncfsu.edu/guests.htm

Holiday Celebration
Dec. 10, Fayetteville
(910) 458-5912
www.fayettevillesymphony.org

A Celtic Yuletide
Dec. 15, Yanceyville
(336) 694-4591

Breakfast with Santa
Dec. 16, Fayetteville
(910) 829-9171
www.fascinate-u.com

Season's Greetings!
Dec. 19–20, Yanceyville
(336) 694-4591

Tom Hunter: Contemporary Narratives
Dec. 23 through July 8, Charlotte, (704) 337-2019
www.mintmuseum.org

Kwanzaa Celebration
Dec. 30, Fayetteville
(910) 488-7130

COAST

Festival of Trees
Through Dec. 3, Wilmington
(910) 772-5444
www.hospicefestivaloftrees.org

"Heaven Came Down"
Through Dec. 16, Edenton
(252) 482-4621
www.visitedenton.com

Christmas in the Park
Dec. 1–3, Morehead City
(252) 504-3710
www.angelabakermusic.com

Core Sound Waterfowl Weekend
Dec. 1–3, Harkers Island
(252) 728-1500
www.coresound.com

Listing Information

Deadlines: For February: December 24 | For March: January 24

Submit Listings Online:
Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click "See NC" to add your event to the magazine and/or our Web site. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com



Festival of Trees

Dec. 1-7, Morehead City
(252) 808-6085

Twelve Days of Christmas Sale

Dec. 1-12, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Christmas Flotilla

Dec. 2, Morehead City
(252) 728-7317

Mattamuskeet NWR

Open House
Dec. 2, Swan Quarter
(888) 493-3826
www.hydecountry.org

Decoy Festival

Dec. 2-3, Harker's Island
(252) 447-7688
www.decoguild.com

The Lovell Sisters

Dec. 6, Oriental
(252) 249-1529

Christmas with

Barbara Martin & Mac Walter
Dec. 7, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Caroling on the Green

Dec. 8, Edenton
(252) 482-2637

Christmas Candlelight Tour

Dec. 8-9, Edenton
(252) 482-7800

Nassail Bowl

Dec. 8-9, Edenton
(252) 482-2637

Chris Cringle Craft Show

Dec. 8-9, Washington
(252) 946-6208

Confection Perfection

Dec. 8-9, Edenton
(252) 482-8005

Christmas Parade

Dec. 9, Wallace
(910) 285-4044
www.wallacechamber.com

Concert Chorale Outer Banks

Dec. 9, Roanoke Island
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

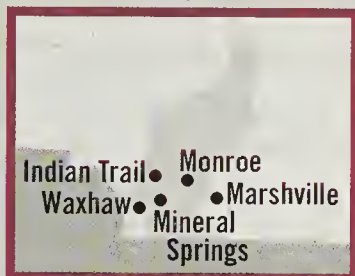
Christmas Walk

Dec. 9, Beaufort
(252) 728-5225
www.beauforthistoricsite.org

Christmas Open House

Dec. 10, Bath
(252) 923-3971
www.bath.nchistoricsites.org

CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures

Union County**Union Power Cooperative territory**

The birthplace of the nation's seventh president, Andrew Jackson, this bustling county is one of the fastest-growing in the state. Monroe, population 30,392, is the county seat. Its tree-lined downtown offers an 1886 Victorian Italianate courthouse, specialty shops and trendy restaurants. The historic town of Mineral Springs hosts the Queen's Cup Steeplechase every April. Greenways and horseback riding trails are spread throughout Union County, which has the largest equestrian population in the state. Wingate University, a liberal arts college, offers many cultural and athletic events open to the public. Union County's easternmost town, Marshallville, was the boyhood home of country music star Randy Travis.

Three top spots:

Cane Creek Park: This family-oriented recreation facility in Waxhaw offers 1,050 acres of land that surrounds a 350-acre trophy bass lake. Largemouth bass fishing is enjoyed here, as well as bluegill, catfish and crappie fishing. Camping (more than 100 sites) and six rustic cabins are available. (704) 843-3919 or www.co.union.nc.us/gov_offices/parks/parks.htm.

Museums: Two are housed at the JAARS Center, located near Waxhaw (about 30 miles south of Charlotte). The Museum of the Alphabet contains a colorful array of displays and artifacts showing the history of inscribed languages. (704) 843-6000 or (704) 843-6066. The Mexico Cárdenas Museum honors a former president of Mexico, Lazaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), and his legendary commitment to the people of Mexico, offering Cárdenas' books, along with old photographs, native costumes and folk art. (704) 843-6000 or (704) 843-6045 or www.jaars.org/museums.shtml.

Indian Trail celebration: Indian Trail will be 100 years old in 2007 and will be celebrating its Centennial all year. Festivities start in March 2007 and include a town birthday party, Centennial Pageant, dance, Founders Day Celebration, Easter Egg Hunt and more. (704) 821-8114 or www.indiantrail.org.

Learn of other nearby adventures and events:
(704) 289-4567, (704) 225-1085
www.visitmonroenc.org



Monroe's 1886 Victorian Italianate courthouse

Tools for easier gardening

Gardening needn't necessarily be abandoned because of impaired mobility, limited strength or other health problems. Consumers now have a wide variety of options to make gardening easier or more accessible—from specialty hand tools to accessories that can be used to modify existing tools. Many are also effective at preventing such maladies as repetitive-motion injuries and back strain.

- ▶ Tools with ergonomically designed handles help keep the hand in a natural position: wrists straight, hands rotated and relaxed, fingers curled and thumbs straight. “Pistol-grip” and curved handles encourage this posture. Tools with permanent or add-on arm braces and support cuffs further reduce hand strain, transferring strength from the forearm directly to the blade or tines.
- ▶ Yard tools with telescopic handles help extend reach and are particularly useful for gardening in a sitting position, such as from a bench or wheelchair. This design is available in rakes, cultivators and trowels. Extended-reach pruners are also available.
- ▶ Pruners and loppers with ratcheting mechanisms help boost cutting power. They grip and hold a branch, allowing the user to release and squeeze again, cutting a single branch progressively.
- ▶ The Bionic™ gardening glove, designed by an orthopedic hand surgeon, received the Arthritis Foundation's Ease of Use commendation for its ability to help reduce hand fatigue and maintain gripping strength. The anatomically positioned palm pads are designed to support the hand's natural closure and provide protection against development of calluses and blisters.
- ▶ The Arthritis Foundation also gave its seal of approval to Fiskars PowerGear® tools, which are said to provide 35 percent more cutting power compared to standard manual tools. They have rotating finger grips and adjustable hand-opening sizes and are available in pruners, loppers and hedge shears.
- ▶ Cut-and-hold floral snips grasp the stems of roses and other flowers after they are cut so they don't drop to the ground, which is especially helpful for gardeners with the use of only one hand. This action is also available in larger pruners that sever branches or cut and harvest fruit in a single motion.
- ▶ Oscillating hoes have hinged, stirrup-shaped blades that cut on both the forward and backward motion. Since dirt doesn't stack up behind the blade, the hoe reduces back strain from stooping and bending. The blades can be attached to a regular tool handle or broom handle.
- ▶ Add-on T-grip and D-grip handles are available for straight-handled tools such as snow shovels, rakes and hoes. They help increase lifting/pushing power and leverage while decreasing back and wrist strain.

Learn more about specialty tools at www.handhelpers.com.



Carla Burgess can be reached at nvgardenshare@mindspring.com.

For more gardening advice, go to the “Carolina Gardens” section of www.carolinacountry.com.



Wax myrtle is a native evergreen with fragrant, bluish-white, waxy berries

Wax myrtle: An evergreen classic

Wax myrtle, also called Southern bayberry, is a native shrub that deserves more attention in landscaping. The narrow, evergreen leaves and fragrant, bluish-white, waxy berries, once a common ingredient of bayberry candles, are winning attributes. Wax myrtle also withstands a range of inhospitable conditions—including waterlogged or sandy soils and salt spray. Because of its fast growth, it is popular as privacy screening. Left to its own devices, wax myrtle can reach heights up to 20 feet. It has multiple trunks and is extremely tolerant of pruning, making it a great choice for hedgerows. Wax myrtle is also easily trained into tree form by keeping the lower limbs removed. Many of us are familiar with wax myrtles from seeing the gnarled, bonsai-like shape they assume in maritime forests—which can be a charming look in a specimen tree. Typically an eastern Piedmont and coastal plain species, wax myrtle is suitable for growing zones 7–10. It has excellent value for wildlife, providing shelter and food for birds. The yellow-rumped warbler was once commonly called the myrtle warbler due to its fondness for the berries.

Hort shorts

- ▶ When cutting evergreen branches for decorating, use the same care you would when pruning the plant. Avoid making hasty, unattractive cuts.
- ▶ Plant edible and ornamental sweet peas in winter. Seeds will germinate when ground temperatures are cool enough, and seedlings will emerge when conditions are right. 🌱

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How to stay warm and save energy overnight

Setting back the furnace thermostat at night and using an electric blanket can cut your utility bills significantly during the winter. Depending upon your climate, you can reduce your heating bills by 1 to 2 percent for each degree you lower the thermostat setting at night.

It is a common misconception that it takes more energy to reheat the house in the morning than you save from lowering the thermostat overnight. The only caveat is, if you have a heat pump and the backup resistance heaters in the electric furnace come on in the morning to quickly reheat the house. There are several ways to control this with a manual thermostat or just install a special setback thermostat for heat pumps with backup resistance heating.

Everyone likes to be comfortably warm, especially as we relax before bedtime. If you can manage and properly control the temperature drop, your bedroom can be comfortable for sleeping at a lower room temperature. For people with sinus problems, sleeping in cooler room air is less drying to their sinuses.

The best method to have a comfortable temperature setback at night is to install a programmable clock thermostat. Program it so it does not start to lower the temperature until just after you are in bed and then raises it just before you awake in the morning. If you manually set a standard thermostat lower at bedtime, the entire house will be colder when your family awakes in the morning. The earlier you can set the thermostat lower, the more you will save, so experiment with earlier times as your family adjusts to the temperature changes.

Using an electric blanket or mattress pad is an excellent method to stay comfortable all night long. My computerized thermostat always lowers the temperature at night and I have used an electric blanket for years. Recently though, I have switched to a dual control (one for each side) electric mattress pad. I prefer feeling the warmth from beneath my body and less weight on top of me.

My queen-size mattress pad uses only 220 watts and it cycles on and off to maintain a steady temperature. The average electricity usage is less than 100 watts, about as much as a standard light bulb uses. When you compare this to cutting your heating bills by up to 10 percent, the overall electricity savings are significant.

The key differences among various brands and models of electric blankets and mattress pads are the controls and the heating wires. The best, but more expensive, models use digital ambient temperature controls. This circuitry senses as the room cools throughout the night and automatically increases the heat output to compensate for steady comfort. Better blankets also use longer-lasting fabrics.

Better controls have a preheat setting and also provide nearly silent operation. Cheaper electric controls make a quiet click when the internal thermostat switches them on and off throughout the night. If you cannot fall asleep easily, the clicking can become quite annoying.




This electric blanket has a digital ambient control on the table. It uses heating wire which senses your body temperature. Wireless remote controls are also available.

Select a blanket or mattress pad with PTC (positive thermal coefficient) heating wire. Its resistance changes as the temperature changes. Where the blanket or pad is resting tightly over or under your body, and therefore warmer, its heating output decreases. This maintains a more constant sleeping temperature near your body.

Other tips to stay comfortable in a cooler bedroom are to increase the thermal mass in the bedroom with ceramic planters or other masonry items. When the thermostat is set back at night and the room air temperature starts to drop, the thermal mass transfers its heat content to the room. This will slow down the air temperature drop in the room. This is helpful if it takes time for someone to fall asleep.

If you have ceiling fan or other penetrations in the bedroom ceiling, seal them well to minimize the loss of heated room air. You can install an electric radiant heating panel on the wall or ceiling. These panels produce sensible heat quickly in the morning if you feel chilly when you first get up.

To get the children on board, consider using one of the new Story Blankets.

These blankets have a two-minute battery-operated LED light and soundtrack built into them. There also is a sleep mode with a gradually fading light display at the end of the story. 

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

The following companies offer electric blankets/mattress pads:

Perfect Fit (800) 299-1378
www.perfectfitindustries.com

Sunbeam (800) 892-7684
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West Point Home (800) 533-8229
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Peanut Butter Snowballs

- 2 cups nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 cup chunky peanut butter
- 1 cup honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 ounces white candy coating, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup shortening
- 3 cups flaked coconut

In a large mixing bowl, combine the milk powder, peanut butter, honey and vanilla. Shape into 1-inch balls. Place on a waxed paper-lined baking sheet. Let stand, uncovered, for 30 minutes.

In a microwave safe bowl, melt candy coating and shortening at 70% power for 1–2 minutes; stir until smooth. Dip balls into coating, then roll in coconut. Return to baking sheet; let stand until set. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

Yield: 3 dozen

Chocolate Peppermint Bark

- 6 squares (1 ounces each) white baking chocolate
- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup crushed peppermint candies, divided

In a microwave safe bowl, melt white chocolate at 70% power; stir until smooth. Repeat with chocolate chips. Stir 6 tablespoons of crushed peppermint candies into each bowl. Drop white chocolate and semisweet chocolate in alternating spoonfuls onto a waxed paper-lined baking sheet.

With a metal spatula, cut through chocolate to swirl, spreading to ¼-inch thickness. Sprinkle with remaining crushed candies. Chill until firm. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Yield: about 1 pound

Winning reader recipe

Oreo Cookie Balls

- 1 package Oreo cookies
- 1 (8 ounces) package cream cheese
- 1 package Almond Bark white chocolate

Put Oreo cookies in food processor, process until real fine. Place crumbs into a bowl and mix with cream cheese. Roll out mixture into marble size balls and place on cookie sheet. Put Oreo Cookie Balls in refrigerator to get cold. Take cookie balls out of refrigerator when cold and dip in melted white chocolate. Put cookie balls on wax paper to dry.

Betty Lawson of Lumberton will receive \$25 for submitting this recipe.

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive \$25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Include your name, address, phone number (if we have questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com



Praline Grahams

- 12 graham crackers (4¾ by 2½ inches)
- ½ cup butter
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup finely chopped walnuts

Line a 15-by-10-by-1-inch baking pan with heavy-duty foil. Break graham crackers at indentations; place in a single layer in pan. In a small saucepan, combine butter and brown sugar. Bring to a rolling boil over medium heat; boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat; add nuts. Pour over crackers.

Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Let stand for 2–3 minutes. Remove to a wire rack to cool.

Yield: 4 dozen

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com



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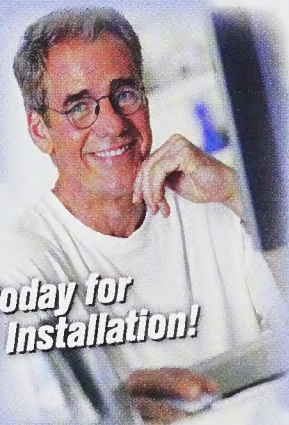
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